



Monday December 23 1996

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The Guardian INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 48,743

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

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The new moral army

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England and rival first Test stand-off

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Bomb puts Ulster on brink

Fears of return to tit-for-tat killing

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

NORTHERN Ireland was on a knife-edge last night as it waited to learn if the attempted murder of a leading republican signalled the end of the loyalist paramilitaries' two-year ceasefire and the resumption of tit-for-tat killing.



Joe Hendron, the SDLP MP for West Belfast, said the attack put "massive" pressure on the IRA to renew its ceasefire. "It looks like a reprisal for the shooting in the children's hospital which occurred in my constituency on Friday night," he said.

Mr Copeland was said to be in a stable condition in hospital last night. A neighbour who was quickly on the scene said Mr Copeland was conscious and in agony after the explosion.

In October 1993 he was wounded when a soldier opened fire on mourners outside the home of Thomas Begley, the IRA man killed by his own bomb along with nine Protestants.

"All of these events put massive pressure on the Republican leadership to call a credible ceasefire."

The Ulster Unionist Party's security spokesman, Ken Maginnis, said the Stormont all-party talks would probably collapse if the loyalists went back to war. "If both traditions are involved in the violence, then I believe that the talks at the present level and within the present structure are not sustainable," he said.



Republican Eddie Copeland's bombed car outside his mother's home in Belfast yesterday. He was injured in the blast

PHOTOGRAPH CRISPIN ROODWELL

MI6 told cabinet chief of Serb link

Richard Norton-Taylor and Michael White

SIR Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, was warned by MI6 that the Tory party was secretly receiving funds from Serb sources at the height of the war in the former Yugoslavia, the Guardian has learned.

MI6 alerted Sir Robin as the senior official responsible for the security and intelligence agencies, according to impeccable Whitehall sources. It is understood Sir Robin passed the warning to the prime minister, John Major.

The revelation came as ministers came under challenge from Labour over the sources of Tory funding. In the wake of yesterday's Observer report about the alleged MI6 role of Harold Ellenson, Conservative MP for Blackpool North since 1992.

The Opposition's campaign spokesman, Brian Wilson MP, has written to the parliamentary ombudsman, Sir Gordon Downey, seeking an inquiry into the Serbian funding allegations. The implications of the affair transcend domestic politics because of charges — not least in the United States — that British foreign policy during the war was biased in Serbia's favour.

The Guardian's sources discuss reports earlier in the year that MI6 reported the secret channel of funding directly to the Prime Minister. It is believed that MI6 was alerted to the donations by Mr Ellenson after one of his many visits to the former Yugoslavia.

Unionists fall out over Goldsmith 'deal'

Michael White
Political Editor

THE nine Ulster Unionist MPs whose votes may decide John Major's fate were last night engaged in a fierce internal row over allegations that their party leader, David Trimble, had negotiated a secret deal with the billioneaire leader of the Referendum Party, Sir James Goldsmith.

All that is officially expected from an announcement due in Belfast today is that the Ulster Unionists' solitary MEP, James Nicholson, will switch his loyalty from the Tory-orientated European

Peoples Party to Sir James' Europe of Nations group which is in danger of losing group status in Strasbourg thanks to a defection to the Gaullists.

The Unionists are a relatively prosperous party and spend far less on elections

than do British Tories. But well-placed Unionists hinted that access to Sir James' vast war chest might be a factor. Mr Trimble, a highly-astute politician, was not contactable.

Suspicious MPs and activists were fearful last night that he might upset their delicate balancing act, seeking to extract concessions from Mr Major's minority government and preparing to do the same to a Blair-led administration.

If Sir James's threat to field 600 Referendum candidates

helps topple Mr Major "Unionists may have to take part of the blame," one said last night. "What price will be asked from us? There's no such thing as a free lunch," said another.

In a sharply-worded statement which will have the support of angry colleagues, the Unionists' veteran deputy leader, John Taylor, said: "Whatever changes or political re-alignments occur in the Strasbourg parliament, they have no impact on the role of the Ulster Unionist Parliamentary party at Westminster."

Major warns Euro rebels, page 5

Old pro Shilton keeps a clean sheet on 1000th league appearance



Ever the stylist: 47-year-old Peter Shilton yesterday

Richard Williams
IT WAS probably the easiest day of his professional life. On his 1,000th appearance in English league football, an unprecedented feat unlikely to be matched, 47-year-old Peter Shilton was called to produce not a single one of the flying fingertip saves or prodigious leaping catches with which he made his reputation as a teenage prodigy.

In a battle between clubs at the bottom of the Third Division, Shilton kept Brighton and Hove Albion at bay to help earn a 2-0 win for his club, Leyton Orient. He fielded half a dozen overhit long balls,

gathered a couple of headed backpasses, caught an inswinging corner and punched away another.

For the rest, he trotted back and forth across his penalty area, periodically touching his toes, keeping himself alert, maintaining the good professional habits which began a lifetime ago, when Harold Wilson was prime minister and weekends began with Ready Steady Go.

It may have been a long way from the floodlit nights on which he won two European Cup winners' medals with Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest, or the 125 England caps amassed during a 19-year international career under Ram-

sey, Revie, Greenwood and Robson, but there were fanfares before the kick-off and, at the end, an ovation from the 7,544 spectators, almost double the usual number at Brisbane Road.

"I've played to bigger audiences," Shilton said afterwards, "but the atmosphere here today was fantastic. I've been very pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest in the game. I wasn't expecting anything like this."

Shilton earned £9 a week when he joined Leicester City as a 16-year-old understudy to the great Gordon Banks. His obsession with the craft of goalkeeping, encouraged by a mother who hung him from the bann-

isters to lengthen his arms, marked him out from his rivals, and before long he had replaced Banks with both club and country. His dedication to fitness training and the constant refinement of technique gave him his extraordinary longevity, and in the run-up to yesterday's celebrations he was keen to promote the notion that he might still have a future as a Premier League performer.

His life outside football has been notoriously bumpy, plagued by personal and financial problems, and his first venture into football management, with Plymouth Argyle, ended in dismissal two years ago.



Stoke versus Wolves, 1974: Teenaged Shilton on debut

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Rome's farewell to secular saint of screen

As the actor Marcello Mastroianni gets a funeral not unlike that of Julius Caesar, Sofia Loren mourns his death as the most painful since that of her mother

Monday sketch



John Hooper

ON THE last Sunday before Christmas, in this vicariously festive capital of Christendom, shops were open and full as their owners strove to turn a few extra million lire before the big day.

Above the bustle, on the Capitoline Hill, in a 12th century building which is now the town hall, an actor who embodied the city's rarely noted secular aspect lay in a coffin smothered with polsiettas.

Reflexively, many who came to pay their last respects to Marcello Mastroianni crossed themselves as they entered the room. Yet there was not a cross nor a candle, not a cleric or a priest to be seen near his bier.

In Paris, where he died,

Mastroianni was bid farewell with a church service, reportedly held at the insistence of his former lover, Catherine Deneuve, who is a devout Roman Catholic. But in Rome, his progress to the grave was kept rigorously free of the whiff of incense.

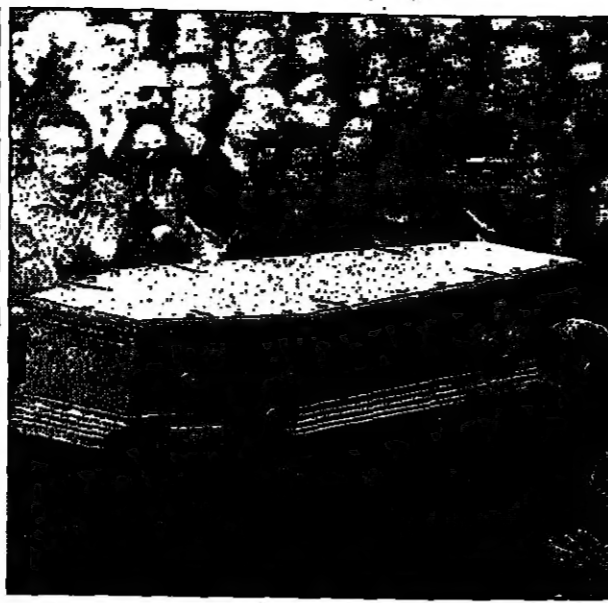
At 11.30, half a dozen council employees in blue suits brought out his coffin to applause from a crowd of several thousand in the square below. They laid the simple oak casket on a red carpet in front of the Palazzo Senatorio.

Some minutes later, Sofia Loren arrived, hand in hand with her son. She took her place next to the dead man's wife, Flora Carabella, among the friends, relatives and colleagues to one side of the coffin.

La Loren played opposite the actor in a dozen films and there was endless speculation, endlessly denied, about whether their many on-screen affairs went further than the set. Events since his death will tend to revive it.

Her immediate reaction to Mastroianni's death has been to say that "this is the most pain I have felt since the death of my mother".

Yesterday, she looked gaunt. On several occasions, she turned away from the coffin with her lips wide apart, as if gulping in air.



The Rome crowd applauds as Mastroianni's coffin passes. Right: Sofia Loren (left), who played opposite him in dozens of films, his wife Flora Carabella and daughter Barbara at the funeral



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIO LAPORTA and GIULIO BROGLIO

Instead of a Mass, what the actor got was something not unlike the funeral service in Julius Caesar. One by one, people who had known him came and stood by his coffin and spoke briefly of their feelings about him.

"The deputy prime minister, Walter Veltroni, remarked that "for millions of people in

the world, saddened by his death, Mastroianni was just a beam of light encountered in a dark room. Yet millions of people could recognize his voice, his silhouette, his gait — that of a man who did not wish to be infected by the world's foolish haste".

His dresser, Angela Innamorati, recalled his love of a

good meal and his fondness for telling funny stories. The film director Mario Monicelli said Mastroianni had achieved so much without ever becoming self-important.

"This has been stressed over and over again in articles written by his fellow-Italians. Mastroianni may have been a reserved man — his dresser

never addressed him with the familiar "tu" — yet he did not let his fame go to his head. Learning on one of the crush barriers placed around the square, Maria Felice Abbatecola said she had got to know him because he was a regular customer of a bar near the dubbing studios in Porta Latina. He found out the same

farewell to the actor by quietly singing Arrivederci Roma. He was, he said, a Neapolitan singer, Vincenzo Cappiello.

"Whenever I find myself in front of a microphone, I try to give my soul to what the writer of the song meant — to convey the emotions he was describing."

"Mastroianni could do that on film. It's something that's inside — in the blood," he said, before walking on.

What happened next would no doubt have delighted Mastroianni.

There was a man selling trays of memories from one of the stalls round the fountain who wanted to know what he had been talking about.

When I explained, he said, with the air of someone who could confide in a foreigner, what he desired not admit to his fellow-Italians. "This Marcello Mastroianni... Who was he?"

He was in his early 30s perhaps — a lot too young to have been around when La Dolce Vita was released.

"Well," said Mastroianni, the most famous scene he ever played was right here, on these steps.

A look of immense relief came over his face. "Oh, yes," he said. "The one what got himself wet."

M16 alerted cabinet chief to secret Serb funds for Tories

continued from page 1
sultan specialising in Eastern Europe.

M16 is believed to have been given approval by Mr Major to continue using Mr Zelston as a secret contact after he became an MP. Yesterday Mr Zelston said the Observer claim was "schoolboy fiction".

As usual with funding allegations, Conservative Central Office refused to comment. But Labour's Mr Wilson said: "The crucial question is whether the Tories accepted Serbian money in the run-up to the last election. We must know who received it, how much and what the Serbs gained in return."

Labour is keen to highlight the Government's special problem: the transformation of an acknowledged £19 million overdraft after the 1992 general election into an election fund that may spend £20 million this time.

"The Serbs were at this time party to a conflict which drew in British servicemen and women, and they and their families will be extremely interested to learn why the Tories were taking the money," Mr Wilson said. Neither Labour nor the Liberal Democrats accept donations from foreigners, and Labour declares all donations over £5,000.

Shortly before the 1992 general election, Serbs close to the regime secretly sent more than £26,000 to Britain and some of it is understood to have found its way into Conservative Party funds.

Mr Major made no direct comment on the affair when interviewed on Friday on GMTV. But he did urge Labour to "step out of the gutter" so that a proper debate could take place on policy. He urged Tony Blair to "speak to his own voters, keep running around with all sorts of deft stories, day after day. Stop trying to tilt the newspapers in a particular direction."

Hong Kong shadow legislature

Woman with a mission for Beijing

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

IN THE twilight of empire, a shift in the rival political fortunes of an elderly Englishwoman from Newcastle and a veteran Chinese nationalist comes as no surprise.

Startling, though, is the result. A Beijing shake-up of Hong Kong's political elite has boosted a Tynesider, aged 83, who barely speaks Chinese and banished a prominent local populist who never learnt English.

The curious fate of Hong Kong's post-colonial parliament came into sharp focus at the weekend with the formation of a 50-member shadow legislature to replace the elected colonial assembly.

The process — conducted across the border in Shenzhen — was described as a "bizarre farce" by the governor, Chris Patten, but as a "great day for Hong Kong" by his shipping tycoon successor, Tung Chee-hwa.

Among those selected to sit on a new pro-China legislature is Elsie Tu, a former missionary who came to Hong Kong in 1951 as Elsie Elliot. Absent from the new assembly is Szeto Wah, a teachers' trade union leader and dogged master of Hong Kong street politics.

In September 1995, Mr Szeto ran against Mrs Tu in the district of Kowloon East. A populist who has long spoken out for both democracy and Chinese nationalism, he got 29,627 votes — 5,772 more than Mrs Tu. On Saturday, she had her revenge.

In a Communist Party meeting hall across the border, Mrs Tu secured 382 votes from a handpicked committee of 400 tycoons and pro-China figures, to win a place as a post-colonial lawmaker. Nine other losers from 1995 also won on Saturday.

"This was not an election but a joke. This is communist-style democracy," Mr Szeto scoffed. "Last year, more than 50,000 people voted [in East Kowloon]. I won and she lost. She says it was not fair. Now 400 people decide everything."

The legislative council elected in 1995 was supposed to sit for four years. But China has always said this could not be agreed to happen, as it was voted in under democratic reforms introduced by Mr Patten without Beijing's consent.

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

Britain was never interested in democracy before. What makes me angry is they would not allow us to have a single elected seat until they knew China was going to take over. Then they jumped straight in with both feet."

Mr Szeto seems an unlikely stooge for British imperialism. He frequently annoyed Hong Kong's colonial administration, organising strikes and turning the study of Chinese, rather than British, history. He also enraged Beijing by leading protests against the Tiananmen Square massacre.



Hong Kong marchers protest against the pro-China shadow assembly PHOTOGRAPH: ANAT SVON

He says Mrs Tu and the Communist Party share a preference for colonial-style paternalism.

"She acts like a goddess. She wanted to help people but when people started helping themselves they no longer needed her and she got angry."

Leader comment, page 8

More bewildering than enchanting

Reviews

Peter Pan
Watermill Theatre, Newbury;
Nuffield Theatre, Southampton

THERE are a number of things you can do with Peter Pan. You can play it as a rich, theatrical tapestry of childhood imagination, brimming with magic and fun. You can present it along traditional pantomime lines, with good fairy Wendy rescuing the Lost Boys from the clutches of evil Captain Hook. You can get all dewy-eyed about Peter's appealing refusal to grow up. Or you can sit back and poke gentle fun at the Edwardian tweezeness of Barrie's original story.

Dilys Hamlett's brisk but uneven production seems to want to do all of these things, and ends up doing none of them with any great conviction. The flight to Never Never Land is ingeniously handled, and there are a few other moments of inventive theatricality, but these are interspersed with a welter of thoroughly unsophisticated visual techniques that undermine any sense of sustained magic. Christopher Holt's Captain Hook looks villainous enough, but rarely acts it, while it's never clear how seriously we are meant to take the sometimes irritatingly hectoring Wendy (Sally Ann Burnett) and her Lost Boys, who look like a cross between something out of Lord of the Flies and a Famous Five spoof. And despite Samantha Seager's attempts to tie the disparate elements together in an energetic performance as Peter, I came out more obviously bewildered

than enchanted. Worse, the young audience is given only one perfunctory opportunity to indulge its evident desire to participate.

The more opulent version of the same story at the Nuffield Theatre, Southampton, capitalises on Juliet Stillingford's bold and colourful design to create a part-spectacular, part-humorous world of childhood fantasy, in which danger is easily surmountable, and the villains are either ineffectual, soft-hearted, or both.

But while the approach is more consistent and less confused than at Newbury, it takes director Patrick Sandford some time to make it work. He lingers far too long in the Darlings' house in a soggy opening scene that goes nowhere. And even when he gets to Never Never Land, everything initially looks a whole lot better than it sounds up doing some of the sometimes less convincing work. He lingers far too long in the Darlings' house in a soggy opening scene that goes nowhere. And even when he gets to Never Never Land, everything initially looks a whole lot better than it sounds up doing some of the sometimes less convincing work. He lingers far too long in the Darlings' house in a soggy opening scene that goes nowhere. And even when he gets to Never Never Land, everything initially looks a whole lot better than it sounds up doing some of the sometimes less convincing work.

Changing names are products of our time

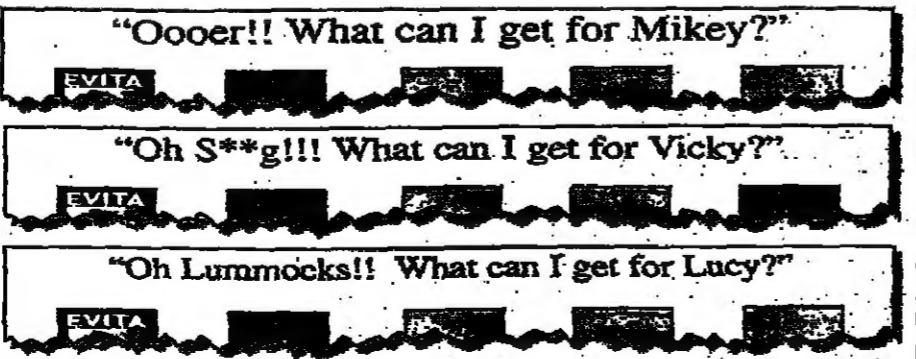
Kamal Ahmed

ONE OF THE first was Katie, the first up-standing housewife who thought Oxo was simply the best in the 1950s. Then there was Sid, the man everybody was hunting in the British Gas shares sale in the 1980s. More recently Nicole and Pope have revealed Renault's delights and Harry and Molly have sold the Safeway name.

This weekend Lucy, Julie, Deirdre and Mikey joined Katie et al in the battle for consumers' minds and wallets.

WEA Records has launched a newspaper campaign aimed at those last minute present buyers with the slogan "What can I get for?"

It chose a list of names and speech patterns that it thought would appeal to readers in various sectors of the social spectrum. For Daily Mail readers the slogan chosen was "Oh lummocks? What can I get for Lucy?", in the Sun the more suggestive: "Oooer! What



Who reads what? Name that campaign, product, newspaper and potential vampire

can I get for Mikey?". For the Mirror and the Guardian Vicky was the name chosen. Deirdre appeared in the Independent and Freddie in the Daily Star.

The series has renewed interest among social analysts in why advertisers use certain names to sell their products.

Why Lucy instead of Teletina? Why Mikey instead of Wayne? And why "Oooer" in some newspapers and "lummocks", "strewth", which appeared in the Sunday Times, and

"s**g", which appeared in the Guardian? "We wanted to use names of people who actually read the newspapers concerned," said Tom McGinness, head of marketing with WEA who oversaw the campaign. "I know a Deirdre and she reads the Independent and a Julie and she reads the Sunday Times. If I knew a Tarquin who read the Sun I still wouldn't use the name. Although I doubt that a Tarquin would read the Sun in any case. Mikey seemed more appropriate."

Only one of the names, Lucy, appears in the top 20 most popular names for children in Britain. Advertisers know that choosing a name that is too popular can cause problems because it can swamp the advertisement's message.

Alfredo Marcantonio, vice-chairman of the advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers, said: "Often advertisers want a character that is a bit of a wally and they might use the name Rodney. If they wanted someone more heroic they might

use the name Glen. For more boring women, I think the names Enid, Gertrude or those favourites Sharon and Tracy would be a good choice."

Advertisers also have to be careful that the characters do not overshadow the message, called "vampirism" in the trade.

Graham Hinton, of Bates Dorland, the creative agency behind the Harry and Molly advertisements for Safeway, said they had to name Harry after the press picked up on the popularity of the character.

"For Molly we first thought of Polly," said Mr Hinton. "We wanted something that played on the film title When Harry Met Sally but Polly didn't work as well as Molly did."

As ever, television is likely to affect next year's most popular names chart. When Shannon became well-known as the star of the Australian soap Home and Away, she climbed 23 places to 11th in the most popular girls' names. Watch Harry and Molly clamber up the charts in 1997.

MORTGAGES

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سكيا من الامل

Terrorist siege enters sixth day



A man peers from a window of the besieged Lima residence, while (right) Tokyo passers-by watch a TV picture of rebel leader Nestor Cerpa. PHOTOGRAPHS: FERNANDO LLANO and ISHIO INOUE

Tokyo backs hard line on Peru rebels

Jane Diaz-Limaco in Lima

THE Peruvian president won support from Japan and other countries yesterday for his refusal to concede any rebel demands or start talks until all the hostages held by the Tupac Amaru guerrillas inside the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima have been freed.

President Alberto Fujimori's tough message, delivered in a nationally televised address, came as conditions inside the residence worsened after an all-night blackout. Notices, handwritten by hostages and stuck in a window in the residence, urged the president to restore electricity, water and telephone services to the besieged building.

Mr Fujimori broke his silence for the first time since about 20 rebels stormed a cocktail party at the residence last Tuesday night, with a terse statement in which he said there would be no talk of peace or accords until the threat of violence had been lifted.

"You can't talk about a peace accord while using terror as the main argument," he said. "They want

dialogue while putting an AK rifle on the necks of the hostages."

He refused to release any of the rebels' jailed colleagues — their main demand — but said the government was not contemplating military action at present.

Only if the rebels freed all their approximately 340 hostages would the government consider negotiating, Mr Fujimori said. He denied that he was avoiding dialogue, and claimed credit for the release of 38 hostages on Friday.

With the telephones inside the residence cut off, the resignation of a previous mediating committee of freed ambassadors, and the constant references of ex-hostages to the need for efficient negotiation, there is concern that there is little communication between the two sides.

The Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, issued a statement backing Mr Fujimori's hard line, in an apparent attempt to quash reports of differences between the two governments over the handling of the crisis.

"We think we are at a stage where we shift our demands from the safety of the hostages to the immediate release of the hostages," Mr Hashimoto said. "It is the Tu-



Photographs apparently smuggled out by freed hostages show captives crowded inside a room in the residence

pac Amaru Revolutionary Movement's turn to respond. Japan supports President Fujimori's televised message to the nation."

Victor Joy Way, the president of the Peruvian congress, said the government had rejected international offers of expert advice from the specialist forces who travelled to Peru when the crisis broke.

He said the government's priority was to guarantee the life and health of all those inside the residence, in an obvi-

ous reference to the lives of the rebels. In his address Mr Fujimori proposed that the rebels, to ensure their safety, surrender their weapons to a committee of guarantors.

Photographs apparently smuggled out of the besieged residence by freed hostages showed local personalities crammed together in rooms, standing, sitting or lying down. One showed a serious-looking Peruvian foreign minister, Francisco Tudela, standing in his shirt sleeves in front of a window.

Mr Tudela spoke to a Lima television station on Saturday after it made radio contact with one of the rebels' walkie-talkies. Claiming to be talking freely, he urged the government to "seriously consider" the rebel demands. He said he thought the Tupac Amaru group was prepared to enter a "complete negotiation" based on points it had transmitted to the government in messages sent through released hostages.

During the same radio contact, the rebel leader, Nestor

Cerpa, said they had not ruled out laying down arms and becoming a political party. Mr Cerpa said, however, that the rebels' condition for such a process to begin remained their firm demand that their members be freed from prison.

Mr Cerpa's message, alongside Mr Fujimori's statement, shows that the two sides remain far from a breakthrough to end the crisis, with the hostages facing the prospect of an uncomfortable Christmas in captivity.

State aid for privatised BR was doubled to £2bn

Labour claims new 'great train robbery' is costing the taxpayer more than ever

Keth Harper Transport Editor

TAXPAYERS gave the privatised railway industry a grumpy start by doubling state aid to almost £2 billion in the first 12 months after privatisation, government figures have revealed.

They show that British Rail received £1.035 billion from the Treasury to run the railway in 1993-94, its last full year. By 1994-95, when the

Government started the sell-off, the figure had jumped to just under £2 billion.

The figures, obtained by the Guardian from British Rail's annual accounts and the Department of Transport's rail budget for the next six years, suggest the handouts will reach a peak this year before dropping to £1.2 billion by 2000.

But these figures are only estimates and will depend on how successfully the new privatised companies run passenger services. The figures

include the grants received by a number of local authorities who operate their own services but pay access charges to Railtrack, the privatised monopoly which took over responsibility for track and signalling from BR.

Andrew Smith, Labour's shadow transport secretary, said last night: "Privatised rail is costing the taxpayer more than ever. This will be another great train robbery unless the Government acts to make sure that money is invested in improving track, signalling, stock and stations."

Mr Smith also pledged action by an incoming Labour government to force Railtrack

to deliver a maintenance and investment programme to modernise the railways. The party would be announcing plans to strengthen regulation by making sure the rail regulator was answerable to ministers.

BR was heavily subsidised during the 1980s, but the Government began to reduce aid by ordering BR to restructure itself more efficiently. This led to the setting up of business units with individual targets, which started to make profits.

The most dramatic example was InterCity, providing fast services between London and the main provincial centres. In BR's last year, operating

costs were reduced by 6 per cent, and the call on the public subsidy was cut by 20 per cent.

Capital investment, as opposed to running costs, reached £1.2 billion, much of which was work for the Channel Tunnel services which started in 1994.

Government sources last night maintained that the figures were well documented, that Railtrack was committed to spending £10 billion over the next 10 years to improve the railway, and that it would have to raise private finance to do it.

The figures show that once local passenger services are sold off next year, state aid will disappear. When the industry is fully privatised by April, the rail franchise director will control the operation of the 25 privatised franchises with a grant from the Government.

However, industry sources suggested that the Government was being over-optimistic in reducing the targets from next year because some train operators would not be able to maintain agreed services.

Mr Smith said that Railtrack was a private monopoly, subject to inadequate regulatory powers, and was failing to spend £2 billion of taxpayers' money as it should.

Labour still undecided on top tax

Michael White Political Editor

GORDON Brown, the shadow chancellor, is under pressure from some Labour strategists to rule out a 50p top rate of tax — for fear it will become a potent weapon in a Tory "Bombshell II" campaign focusing on Labour's tax plans.

However, no such decision has yet been taken and week-end reports that Tony Blair had enlisted his two senior colleagues, John Prescott and Robin Cook, to persuade Mr Brown to abandon the option

were categorically denied by both shadow ministers yesterday — along with suggestions that the so-called big four had reached a decision in conclave on Thursday.

Mr Cook said: "The story is as real as Santa Claus. There was no meeting last Thursday and there was no discussion of tax." Mr Prescott said: "There was no talk about tax."

Labour does, though, face vital choices on taxes. Some Blair advisers believe imposition of the tax on incomes above £100,000, as the Liberal Democrats propose, would only yield the Treasury £1

billion a year — far less than on standard rate. Yet it would allow Brian Mawhinney's campaign team to run scare stories.

"You can hear them saying '£100,000 today, £50,000 tomorrow' can't you?" a well-placed MP said last night.

Mr Brown is already committed to a lower starting rate, 15p initially when possible. But he is keeping other options open, covering corporate, indirect and other tax rates as well as national insurance contributions which the Tories have almost doubled while trumpeting cuts in the standard rate. Mr

Brown and his allies have an open mind on a 50p rate, believing that Mr Blair shares their view that the judgment must be pragmatic, dependent on the "fairness in taxation" pledge and the tougher calculation on whether the money raised would be worth the fuss.

"Whatever we promise we must do what we promise," another senior MP said yesterday.

It would be easier to judge what is feasible closer to election day, when the state of the economy a Blair cabinet would inherit will be clearer, some MPs argue.

Printing company founder to be chairman of Guardian group

THE new non-executive chairman of Guardian Media Group will be Robert Gavron. He succeeds Harry Roche, who retires as chairman on January 10, 1997.

Mr Gavron's business experience has been built around the St Ives Group, Britain's leading printing company, which he founded in 1964, and chaired until 1993. He is the chairman and proprietor of the Folio Society, a director of the Royal Opera House and Royal Ballet, and a trustee of the National Gallery.

The appointment was made by the Scott Trust, owners of the Guardian Media Group. The trust's chairman, Hugo Young, said yesterday: "The trust is delighted Bob Gavron has agreed to take the chairmanship of G.M.G. His great experience equips him perfectly to lead both sides of our business: the magazines, regional papers, broadcasting and publishing companies, together with the liberal newspapers they exist to support."

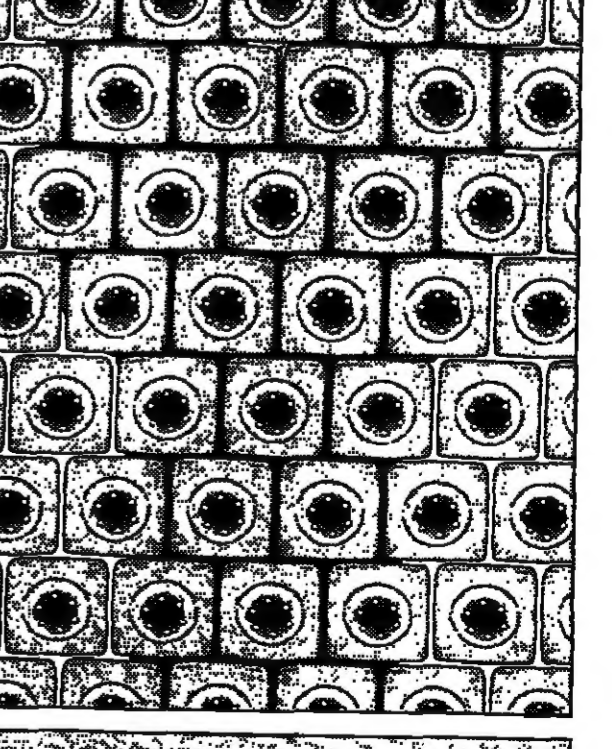
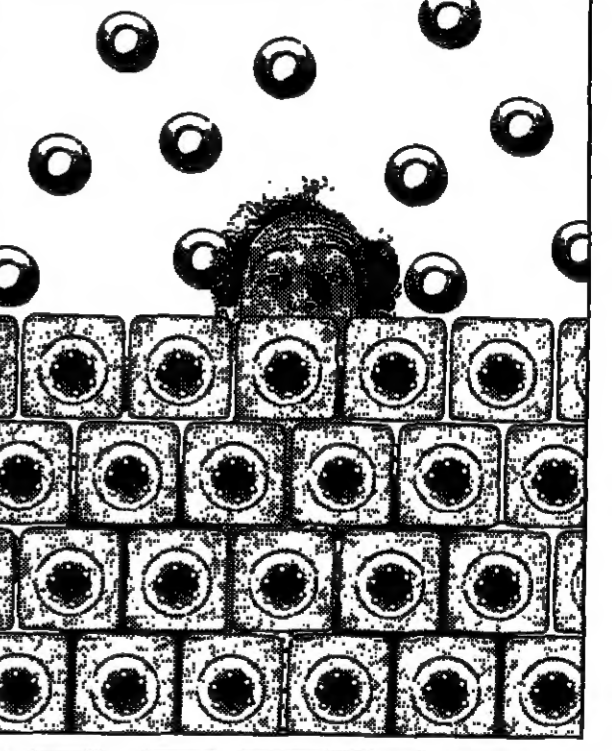
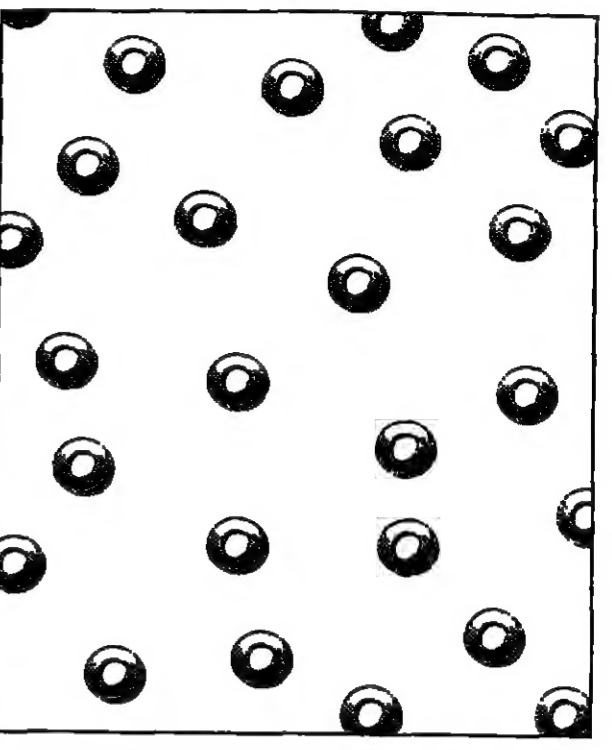
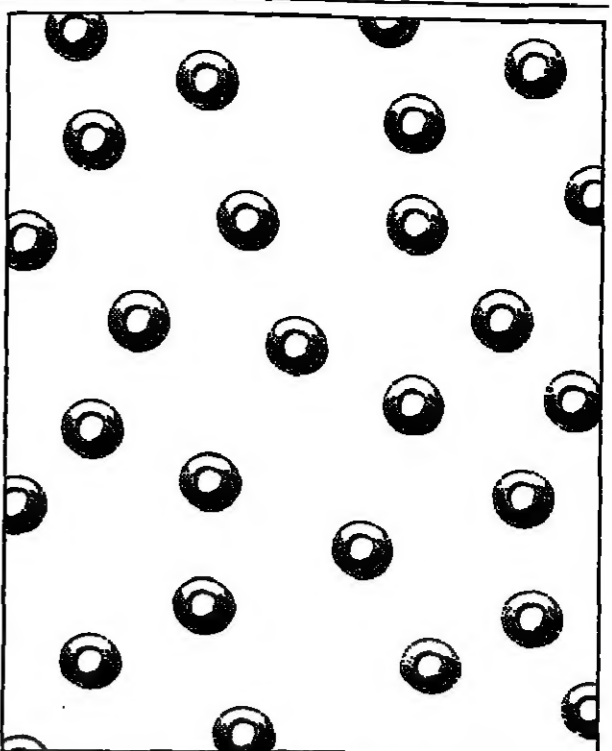
Mr Gavron will join the Scott Trust. Jim Markwick, chief ex-



Robert Gavron: founded leading printing company

ecutive, said: "The board, while sorry to say farewell to Harry Roche... is delighted to welcome someone of the qualities and experience of Bob Gavron."

Mr Gavron said: "I feel greatly honoured to be involved with this unique national newspaper organisation. I believe it is important to protect its independence for the long-term future."



HEAL'S

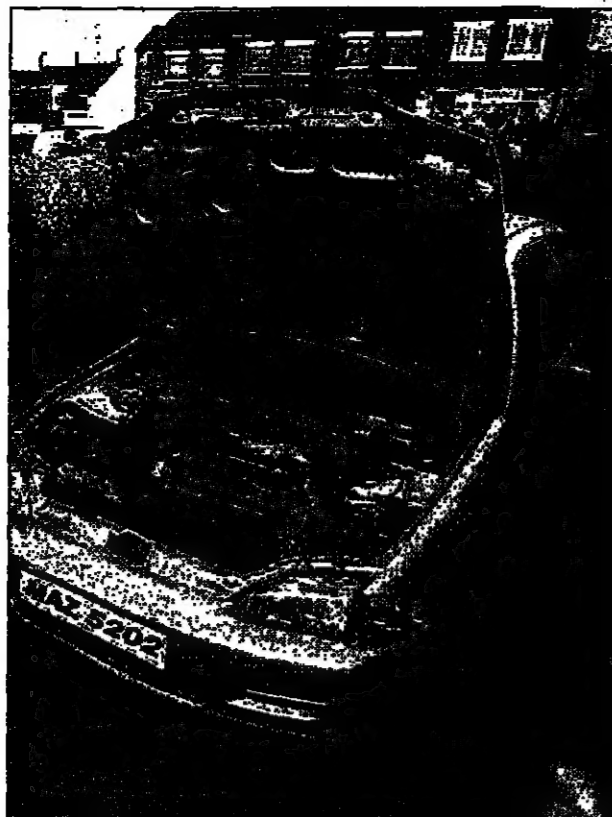
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When I suggest to editor James Brown that perhaps some of this is a little below the belt, he concedes "a lot below the belt", but a chuckle suggests that a lot below the belt is no bad thing. Sam Wollaston joins the Loaded roadshow

G2 page 8

Screen
bawildern
enchanting
PAGES
SCOTLAND



Protestant paramilitaries answered the IRA attack at a children's hospital with a small bomb in the Ardoyne, targeting a nationalist leader. It reverberated across the province. **David Sharrock** on the spectre of a new spiral of violence



The army on patrol in the Ardoyne after a leading republican, Eddie Copeland, was injured by a bomb placed under his car (top left).

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: KELVIN BOYES

Loyalists snap after hospital attack

THE sound of the patience of loyalist paramilitaries finally snapping was a sharp explosion in a north Belfast street yesterday which reverberated across Northern Ireland.

"What did they expect? It couldn't have gone for ever, you know," was the response of one senior loyalist to the under-car bomb which injured the leading republican, Eddie Copeland, outside his mother's house in the nationalist Ardoyne.

"I hope we're not back in the whole spiral again but what did people really expect after going into a children's hospital. In my view, and I know I'm not alone in this, that was as low as Darkey."

The Darkey massacre is one of those moments of horror which occasionally punctuate Northern Ireland's history of killing. Three people were killed and seven injured when gunmen burst into a Protestant church in South Armagh and opened fire on the worshippers.

That the Friday evening attack by the IRA inside Belfast's Royal Hospital for Sick Children, in which an RUC officer was injured, is being compared to Darkey gives some measure of the mood of the loyalist paramilitaries at the close of a year which has seen numerous IRA attacks — some of them successful, others thwarted — but no response from them.

The murder of a Catholic taxi-driver, Michael McGol-

drick, during the week of Drumcree in July is widely believed to have been the work of loyalist paramilitaries in mid-Ulster.

But the leaderships of both "What did the IRA expect? It couldn't have gone for ever, you know"

The main organisations in Belfast, denied responsibility and the Ulster Volunteer Force expelled three members. That action showed that in spite of the pressure to return to war since the IRA bombed Canary Wharf in central London in February, loyalist leaders have held back.

At first it seemed the task would be lightened if the IRA confined its violence to England. But with each attack, and especially after the devastation of the centre of Manchester, the pressure grew.

When Thiepval Barracks, the army's Northern Ireland headquarters, were given the no-warning bomb treatment and a soldier was killed, many thought that the end had finally come.

But almost miraculously, the loyalist paramilitaries held their ceasefire and allowed their politicians to reap a public relations coup.

But the attack at the children's hospital was the final straw. Nigel Dodds, a senior adviser to the Democratic

Unionist leader, Ian Paisley, and a participant in the all-party Stormont talks, was visiting his desperately sick son, Andrew, in intensive care, with his wife Diane.

The IRA later claimed that he was not the target but that its members were trying to kill Mr Dodds's police guards. If anything, this claim deepened the sense of disgust felt throughout the community. The IRA's opportunism shattered the words of peace spoken by Sinn Féin.

The most pressing question posed by yesterday's attack is whether or not Northern Ireland will be dragged back into the old chain of tit-for-tat killings as republicans and loyalists recommit themselves to a battle they know neither side can win. In the three consecu-

five years which preceded the IRA's 1994 ceasefire, loyalist paramilitaries out-killed republicans at a steadily increasing rate. The UVF and the Ulster Freedom Fighters

But there was a time when the paramilitaries' fury would have been vented upon a bar frequented by Catholics on the basis that "any taig will do".

Yesterday's attack was different in that it was against a man who is widely known as a leading republican from a hardline district.

However harsh it might sound, such an attack will not provoke the same revulsion and anger that would have been felt if a random act of violence had been committed against the nationalist community by loyalists.

In an important sense, therefore, the ball is back in the court of the IRA. If yesterday's attack was a warning that the patience of loyalists is not infinite, and if no fur-

ther violent actions are committed by them, then it will be up to republicans to decide whether or not they want to push Northern Ireland over the edge.

Even in the Ardoyne yesterday that did not seem to be the case — there was no boiling anger among the crowds milling around Mr Copeland's house, just relief that he was alive.

By no means does that suggest that Northern Ireland will be spared, but even the residents of hardline areas have grown to love the peace of the past few years and will not lightly allow their neighbours to spoil it.

It may be a slim hope but in these gloomy days it is all that people have left to cling to.

both demonstrated a new capacity to construct and deliver bombs to their targets.

Anything can happen now that the loyalists have finally responded to the ending of the IRA ceasefire 10 months ago.

The question is whether there will be a new chain of tit-for-tat killings

both demonstrated a new capacity to construct and deliver bombs to their targets

Republican 'cat' survives second attempt on life

David Sharrock, Belfast Correspondent

EDDIE Copeland may find himself being nicknamed the cat after surviving yesterday's apparent loyalist attack.

A soldier is serving 10 years in prison for the attempted murder of Mr Copeland during the funeral of the IRA bomber Thomas Begley, who blew himself up with nine Protestants in the Shankill Road in October 1993.

Mr Copeland was standing in the garden of the



Eddie Copeland, shot by soldier at IRA funeral

Begley's Ardoyne home when he was hit twice in the back and chest. His assailant was Trooper Andrew Clarke, of the 9th/12th Lancers, who was on his second tour of duty in Northern Ireland.

After emptying 20 rounds Clarke was disarmed by other soldiers.

During his trial, the Belfast crown court heard of the IRA bomber's frustration at seeing terrorist suspects walking freely and taunting soldiers. Lord Justice Carswell told the court that Clarke had recognised Mr Copeland from photo-

graphs shown to soldiers. Mr Copeland told the court: "I heard shooting and fell to the ground and said to Brian Gillen 'I've been hit'."

Mr Gillen is a close friend of Mr Copeland and another leading Ardoyne republican. Sinn Féin's Ardoyne spokesman, Bobby Lavery, yesterday admitted that Mr Copeland is "a well-known republican supporter, absolutely, and he makes no bones about it, but because of that there's quite a few people in the so-called security forces who hate him".

Mr Copeland's latest survival will enhance his reputation in both the republican and loyalist community. It is understood that he has corresponded with John Adams, the Ulster Freedom Fighter leader from the Shankill Road, who is in the Maze serving a long sentence for directing terrorism. Sources say that the correspondence suggests a relationship built upon rivalry.

In 1994 Mr Copeland was among three "IRA godfathers" named in Parliament by the Ulster Unionist MP David Trimble, now leader of his party.

Merseyside tops NHS protests

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

AHOSPITAL trust on Merseyside has topped the NHS complaints league after logging more than 1,000 grievances every day for a year. The Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen hospitals recorded 1,507 written protests in 1995/96, more than 300 ahead of the next most complained-about trust.

In all three trusts each registered more than 1,000 complaints. The others were Forest Healthcare in Essex, which is based on Whipps Cross hospital, and the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

The total number of written

NHS Trust	Complaints
Royal Liverpool & Broadgreen	1,507
Forest Healthcare, Essex	1,170
Leicester Royal Infirmary	1,125
Guy's & St Thomas, S. London	983
Southeast Health Care	983
Chase Farm, Enfield, N. London	983
Harrogate, Essex	983
St George's, S. London	887
Norfolk & Norwich	788
King's Healthcare, S. London	772

more than others to encourage submission of grievances, and recording systems vary.

The Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen trust says its figures include not only complaints received in writing, but also those made by telephone or verbally to staff.

David Cain, the trust's deputy chief executive, said: "Other trusts may not be as open-minded as we are on complaints. We know we are going to be criticised for having the highest number, but we want to know what the problems are."

The trust is the 12th highest in the country, annually treating 450,000 out-patients, 85,000 in-patients and 120,000 people attending casualty. It

was formed last year by the merger of two leading acute hospitals.

The Department of Health breaks down the figures for complaints into "clinical" or "other". For the second year Havering hospitals in Essex has registered the highest number of clinical complaints — 700 of its total 868.

However, the system is far from consistent: Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge, recorded all its 484 complaints as clinical, yet the Royal Cornwall did so in only 83 cases.

The figures are the last to be produced in the series, a new NHS complaints procedure having been introduced this year.

Jersey police given \$1m for help in busting US drugs smuggler

Philip Jerome

POLICE on Jersey in the Channel Islands have been given \$1 million by the US authorities for their help in tracking down the proceeds of drug-trafficking.

The cash was seized by the US Customs from a Texan drugs smuggler, Victor

Stadter. A trust company based in Jersey which Stadter tried to use to launder the money informed police on the island. They began an investigation that led to \$2.1 million being seized when it was transferred to California.

The American ambassador in Britain, William Crowe, will go to Jersey in the new year to present the award. The \$200,000 represents about

5 per cent of the force's budget, and will be used to combat drug-trafficking and promote anti-drugs education on the island.

Under Jersey law, any finance company dealing with money believed to be connected with drug-trafficking must inform police. Around 300 reports are made each year but according to Detective Inspector Peter Hopper,

head of the force's commercial branch, only 5 per cent lead to investigations.

Stadter has a long history of involvement in drug smuggling and money laundering, and used at least 12 aliases. He is believed to have arranged the daring helicopter escape of a man from Santa Maria prison in Mexico, the basis of the Charles Bronson film Breakout.

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Airport fracas as Christie flies in after brother's death



There were angry scenes at Heathrow yesterday as Linford Christie (above) arrived back in Britain following the killing of his brother.

Cameramen were jostled as Christie, surrounded by colleagues, left the arrivals hall after landing on a Malaysian Airlines flight from Kuala Lumpur.

to appear at Marylebone magistrates court in London today charged with the murder of the Olympic sprint champion's younger brother, Russell Christie, 34, of west London, died in hospital early on Friday from stab wounds to his neck.

Major warns Euro rebels against splitting party

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN Major yesterday slapped down right-wing Tory colleagues challenging his "wait and see" policy on European issues like the single currency debate — and warned his warring factions that they could trigger the party's worst split in 150 years.

election, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is said by friends to be preparing to outflank potential rivals like John Redwood and Michael Portillo by openly questioning the merits of continued European Union membership.

about wanting to leave Europe, that is not in the British interest and it isn't going to happen. But because we stay in the EU arguing, as I once put it, at the heart of the debate... does not mean we agree with everything our European partners do.

tair Stewart Labour, he argued, would be "much more centrist". He played down the Tory party row over Europe, saying: "We're a very vigorous political party. We believe in debate. The Labour Party are trying to suppress debate. Our prospects today are brighter for the future than at any time since I first took an interest in politics."

Funding push by top colleges

Donald MacLeod Education Correspondent

HEAVYWEIGHT research universities yesterday staked a claim to the lion's share of scarce public funding to keep up with international competition.

New exam 'a waste of time'

EXAMS for low-achieving 16-year-olds promoted by Sir Ron Dearing, the Government's chief education adviser, have been criticised because they will award marks to candidates who spell their names correctly.

awarded marks for filling in their names, addresses, the date, and the name of the school. A maths paper shows children five pencils and asks them to count them and identify the longest one.

short of calling for a formal Ivy league, they believe certain types of research, particularly in science, need a large infrastructure and work best where institutions are large enough for academics in related fields to co-operate.

Academic defends underclass claim

Threat to society from 'immoral people of low intelligence'

Luke Harding

A PROFESSOR was unrepentant yesterday following outrage over his claim that society is being threatened by a degenerate underclass which is outbreeding intelligent people.

decline in the quality of civilised life. He stops just short of recommending what he calls "coercive eugenics" but is writing a second book which addresses the issue.

some measures need to be taken. Prof Lynn's thesis will reopen the debate about whether there is any link between genes, social class and intelligence.

example, offering the morning after pill over the counter. He added: "The professional classes are a lot more efficient at handling contraception."

News in brief

E. Coli bug poisons outbreak investigator

A POLICEMAN investigating Scotland's food poisoning outbreak is suspected of having contracted the illness. The detective constable is among a team of Strathclyde police officers based at Wishaw collecting evidence for a fatal accident inquiry into the outbreak of E. coli that has resulted in 15 deaths.

Charles guru 'seduced girl'

SIR Laurens van der Post, the Prince of Wales's "spiritual guru", had a child by a 14-year-old entrusted to his care and later denied he was the father, it was claimed yesterday.

Mandelson rides in style

LABOUR'S chief election planner, Peter Mandelson MP, is to register the loan of a chauffeur-driven Rover to staff working in the Opposition's campaign office on Millbank near the Commons.

Crash heads for cinema

A CUT version of the film Crash could be screened in cinemas by the end of January. Censors have recommended that the film, which depicts sadomasochists aroused by car accidents and mutilation, should be cleared for release.

£10m and no lottery publicity

A LOTTERY ticket holder who elected to avoid publicity won Saturday's £10.3 million jackpot. Twenty tickets won £18,000 each by matching five numbers plus the bonus ball: 6, 26, 35, 38, 42, 45, and bonus ball 45.

This Christmas, give him something he'll probably never use.

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We know it's difficult buying Christmas presents for men. After all, how many pairs of socks can one man wear?

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After all, it's the best shaver we've ever made. Its unique pivoting head is specifically designed to follow the contours of the face. The result is our closest shave yet.

And, with models ranging from £49.99 to £119.99, it should be easy enough to find one that suits him.

Of course, you could play safe and get him another pair of socks this year.

But just try returning them to the shop after 90 days' use and see what reaction you get.

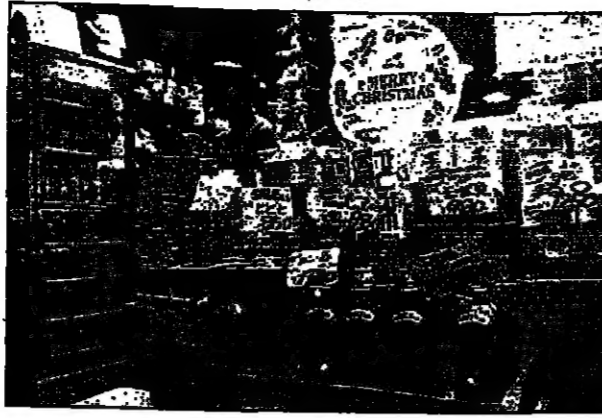
In the unlikely event that you are not satisfied, please complete this form and return it with your Braun Flex Integral Shaver to the original packaging with your original receipt (proof of purchase) and we will be pleased to refund you the full purchase price.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ POSTCODE: _____ CONFIRMATION: I have read the above information. I understand that I am not entitled to a refund if I have used the shaver for more than 30 days. I agree to the terms and conditions of the guarantee. I agree to provide my name and address to Braun for the purpose of the guarantee. I agree to provide my name and address to Braun for the purpose of the guarantee. I agree to provide my name and address to Braun for the purpose of the guarantee.



Sleaze seeps out of gift-wrapping

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo reports on the problem of corruption and bribery at the highest level in a country where the giving of presents is a time-honoured custom



IT IS open season for corruption in Japan again. For the past month newspapers have been full of stories about bureaucrats on the take, politicians receiving illegal donations, doctors being paid to falsify research and police accepting bribes.

As with the Lockheed scandal in the 1970s, the latest excesses coincide with a drive for administrative reform, and many at Kasumigaseki, Japan's Whitehall, feel that the corruption issue is being

used as a stick to beat them into relinquishing power. Other analysts suggest that the police are cracking down in an effort to restore their reputation after the fiasco of the Aum supreme truth cult investigation. Whatever the stimulus, corruption itself is widely held to be endemic in a country where gift-giving is an essential part of social interaction.

The main target of the latest purge has been the former chief civil servant at the ministry of health and welfare, Nobuharu Okamitsu. His arrest on December 4 on bribery charges was the first of such a senior official since the Recruit scandal which brought down the then prime minister, Noboru Takeshita, in 1988.

The police allege that Mr Okamitsu took a kickback of 60 million yen (\$310,000) after granting state subsidies to a nursing-home operator. Another ministry official has been arrested, one sacked and 15 others punished for accepting expensive meals, golf club memberships and cash gifts from the same source.

While this case has been simmering away, a second has threatened to boil over at the ministry of trade and industry where, it is claimed, oil industry representatives have bought political favours with gifts and hospitality. The scandals have sucked in some senior members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Newspapers have reported claims that the party chief, Taku Yamasaki, and the finance minister, Hiroshi

Mitsuzuka, have also accepted political donations. At the end of last month the prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said he was "overwhelmed by the series of public scandals that have sharply reduced public trust in the administration". Yet he too has been forced to admit accepting a 2 million yen (\$10,500) campaign contribution from a company linked to the Okamitsu scandal.

Despite these and a catalogue of other lesser scandals, the government has so far escaped with its popularity intact. Last week Mr Hashimoto's personal rating rose to its highest since his re-election in October. "The shocking thing is that nobody is shocked any more," said Professor Takeshi Sasaki, a political scientist at Tokyo University, who has taught many of the bureaucrats now under attack. "Many Japanese, including myself, suspect that this kind of thing is going on all the time. Okamitsu's case and the others merely confirm our suspicions; corruption is an everyday phenomenon."

Hebron talks deadlocked as violence flares

Jessica Berry in Jerusalem

THE American negotiator trying to break the deadlock over an Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, Dennis Ross made little headway yesterday as new Arab-Israeli clashes flared in the West Bank town. Mr Ross met Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, before going to Gaza to meet the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat. His visit comes at a time when the Israeli and Palestinian leaders are caught up in an alarming display of brinkmanship. Under the Oslo accords, Israel was to have left Hebron last March, but the talks have been stuck, mainly on the issues of the right of Palestinian police to carry weapons and Israel's insistence on being able to pursue suspects into Palestinian areas.

At first Mr Arafat greeted the envoy's visit with disdain. He accused Washington of bias towards Israel. The secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said last week that Israel had moved to accommodate the Palestinians on the issue of Hebron, and that it was now for the Palestinians to make concessions. But after meeting Mr Ross he described their talks as "constructive and fruitful". "We discussed how to push the peace process forward in all means," he said. The Israeli defence minister, Itzhak Mordechai, said after meeting Mr Ross: "Israel has advanced towards compromise on some important issues on the Hebron question in the desire to bring the matter to a conclusion, and now it is up to Yasser Arafat to take similar steps."



Africa's only wild equines, the horses of Namibia, strut their stuff among the sand dunes and rock fields of the Namib desert, one of the most desolate parts of the continent. PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN BOSHAFF

Weizman trips on anti-gay remarks

Danury Gur-arish in Jerusalem

THE Israeli president, Ezer Weizman, was in hot water yesterday after weekend remarks which outraged Israeli gays and liberals and undermined the former air force chief's Duke of Edinburgh-style talent for the *faux pas*. Mr Weizman, whose presidential role is largely symbolic, triggered the row in a rambling response to a question after a speech to high school students which was interpreted as homophobic. "Homosexuality is abnormal from a social point of view. I don't like it. What the public decides to do with homosexuals, it will decide through laws," he said to applause from students. But the cheers turned to giggles when he added that homosexuality "has become nice". "Has become nice", his voice rising in tone. He repeated the word "nice" in an even higher pitch. Mr Weizman's aides were scrambling yesterday to dislodge their boss's foot from his mouth. "The president will meet with a respectable delegation of homosexuals and lesbians today and I think things will be clarified," said

Arieh Shumer, Mr Weizman's office director. Pressed on Mr Weizman's reaction to the storm his remarks provoked, Mr Shumer said: "He doesn't retract his statements." Rabbi Israel Meir Weizman, but hundreds of Israelis protested outside his Jerusalem home and demanded his resignation. "It grants legitimacy to illegal attacks, to incitement and it invalidates a whole section of the public which under the law is equal in every way. The president of Israel is delegitimising this group," said Yael Dayan, an MP. In 1994 Mr Weizman outraged women's groups when, commenting on one woman's quest to become an air force pilot, he said a woman's place was in the home. Earlier this year he compared Islamic guerrillas fighting Israeli troops in Lebanon to Nazis. Menahem Shatzaf, a former Weizman aide and now a member of Israel's main gay rights organisation, said the president had gone too far. "It hurts me to see how this man has deteriorated. It almost makes me say this is not the same person who was elected president," he told Israel Radio. "His ignorance simply amazes me." — Reuters.

Jordan hides Israeli business links

Few successful ventures are publicised, writes Mariam Shahin in northern Jordan

THE al-Hassan industrial estate sits in the middle of nowhere in the northern desert of the Hashemite kingdom. This is the unlikely home of one of the few successful joint ventures between Jordanian and Israeli businessmen which have been publicised in the two years since the two countries signed a peace deal: an underwear company producing popular designer labels. Every morning, six days a week, 300 women — most of whom come from northern villages and a nearby Palestinian refugee camp and wear veils — are used to the Century Wear factory to sew garments for export to the United States. Pre-cut women's underwear, men's jockey shorts and

producing garments for the US lingerie line Victoria's Secrets, as well as Hanoor, Gap, Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan and Banana Republic. But the Century investment group is one of the few to have gone public with its joint venture. Opposition to trade with Israel has been growing since Benjamin Netanyahu became Israel's prime minister last May. While Jordan imported \$1.8 billion-worth of Israeli goods in 1995, Israel imported Jordanian goods worth just \$225,000. Jordanian manufacturers say that Israel's economic policies — including 50 per cent tariffs and bureaucratic transport procedures — have been unfavourable to them. Nizar Darwazah, who heads Jordan's Chamber of Commerce, says that Israel has limited Jordanian exports to Israel and the Palestinian territories. Israel wants to keep

News in brief

Greek farmers to end their blockade

GREEK farmers voted yesterday to end their crippling blockade of the country's main roads and railways, 25 days after launching their protest against economic austerity measures. To growing disquiet with their action, farmers leading the revolt from the central town of Larissa announced that they had decided to stop blocking roads with their tractors as a goodwill gesture during the festive season. The blockade not only cut off Greece in half but sealed its international borders, stranding thousands of foreign lorry drivers. Its effects are believed to have cost the economy more than \$90 million. The prime minister, Costas Karamanlis, has faced a barrage of strikes and protests from workers denouncing his tough budget, which was passed by parliament on Saturday. The stringent fiscal policies form part of his government's efforts to meet the criteria for a single European currency. The farmers said they would reconvene after the holidays with a view to staging more protests. — Helena Smith, Athens.

Mobutu may appoint PM

President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire may appoint a prime minister if the political parties fail to meet his deadline today for forming a crisis government to deal with the rebels fighting in the east of the country, aides said. His spokesman said yesterday that Mr Mobutu could invoke his emergency powers to name a new prime minister. "The president is open to all possibilities, but what he hoped for was unity to face the war in the east, because if political leaders remain divided it will only serve the rebels' cause," the spokesman, Kabuya Lumumba, said. Political parties have squabbled among themselves over who is to lead a government to handle the war against the Rwandan-backed rebels. — Reuters, Kinshasa.

Navidad comes early

CHRISTMAS festivities began with ecstatic joy in the Spanish city of Valencia yesterday when the lottery billed as the world's largest showered its jackpot of 33 billion pesetas (\$160 million) on hundreds of residents. The main prize, which Spaniards call "el gordo" (the fat one), was divided among the holders of 120 tickets. In total, 166 billion pesetas in tax-free winnings were handed out as part of the Christmas draw. One of the winners was present when a pupil of Saint Ildefonso School in Madrid picked out the lucky number, and leaped up in jubilation. Security guards quickly hustled him out of the room as reporters tried to get his first reaction. — AP, Madrid.

Singapore party's built-in win

SINGAPORE'S prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, who is expected to announce today the date for a general election, is confident his People's Action Party (PAP) will have a parliamentary majority even before voting takes place. Singapore Television reported him saying yesterday that he did not expect opposition parties to be able to field more than 40 candidates for the 86 elected seats, which would mean the PAP would have a ready-made majority. This happened in the last elections in 1991. Opposition parties have long had difficulty persuading people to stand against the monolithic PAP, which has transformed Singapore's economy. — Reuters, Singapore.

Tajik hostages 'to be freed'

THE release of two opposition representatives being held hostage in Tajikistan could be imminent, the Inter-Tass news agency said yesterday. The two are the last of 23 hostages, including seven United Nations military observers, taken captive by gunmen on Friday. The other captives were released on Saturday evening. The hostages were members of a joint government-opposition commission monitoring a ceasefire in Tajikistan. The kidnappers belong to a group led by a warlord, Rezvon Sadurov, who early this month switched over to the government side, the Inter-Tass news agency said. — AP, Dushanbe.

Mines kill five children

FIVE children died yesterday when they stepped on mines in the breakaway Russian region of Chechnya, news agencies reported. The accident took place near a road about six miles from the capital, Grozny, the deputy Chechen prime minister, Mowlad Udayev, told the Inter-Tass news agency. The five victims, all boys, were aged between 10 and 12. — Reuters, Moscow.

What distinguishes new moralists like Anne Atkins is that they project themselves with chilling efficacy as representatives of mainstream opinion.

G2 cover story

سكنا من الامل

Case grows for poll fraud

Jovan Kovacic in Belgrade

MEMBER of an international mission sent to Serbia to investigate allegations that President Slobodan Milosevic's government manipulated the local election results said yesterday that the evidence of official malpractice "seems to be impressive".

The veteran American diplomat Max Kampelman, a member of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) team, spoke as the demonstrations for and against Mr Milosevic's government continued.

Felipe Gonzalez, the OSCE mission leader and former Spanish prime minister, said the group had completed its investigation and would make recommendations within a week.

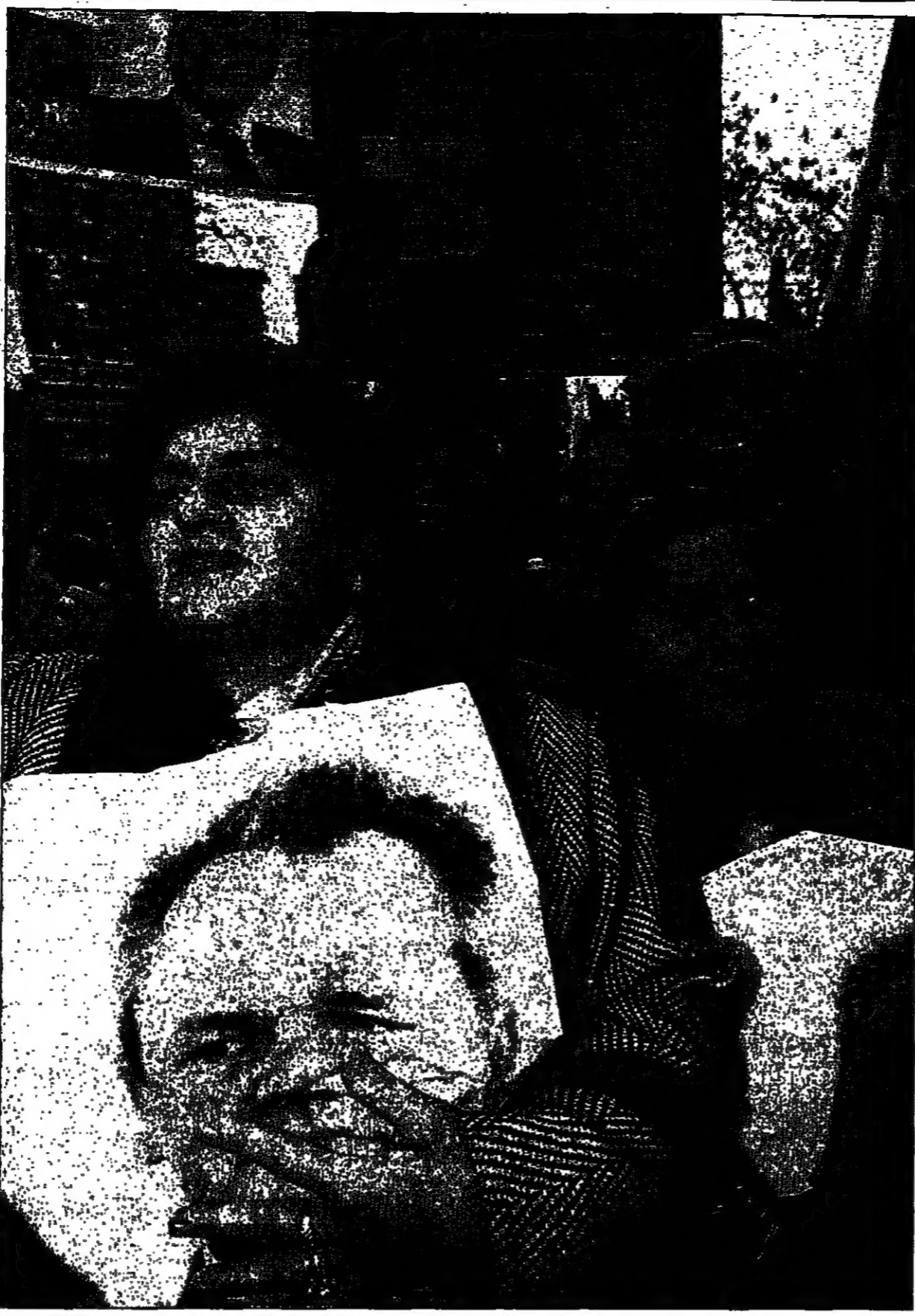
The opposition coalition Zajedno (Together) claimed to have proved to OSCE that it was cheated of victory in the capital Belgrade and 14 towns in the local elections, the spark that ignited huge street demonstrations against Mr Milosevic.

Opposition sources said the OSCE team has persuaded Mr Milosevic to surrender the towns and Belgrade. In return, he will retain the right to call a new poll early next year to try to recover them for his Socialist Party.

Zajedno said the Socialists were planning to hold "final" demonstrations in Belgrade in support of Mr Milosevic tomorrow.

Diplomats are afraid that growing hatred and the proximity of the two rival groups could easily cause the violence which the Zajedno leaders and Mr Milosevic have promised to avoid.

Zajedno accused the police of intimidating the population of smaller towns to stop them demonstrating. Arrests were reported in Zajecar and Kraljevo. The police arrested three demonstrators and beat two of them in the town of Smederevo yesterday, Zajedno said.



Socialist Party members rally for Slobodan Milosevic in the town of Smederevo yesterday

Serbia's sleeping dogs beginning to stir

The men who did Milosevic's dirty work watch with interest the protests against him, writes Julian Berger in Belgrade

SERBIA'S dogs of war may not yet be straining at the leash, but they have one eye open and are watching civil rights protests with carnivorous interest. The last time President Slobodan Milosevic was under serious pressure to grant democratic reforms, he made them rich by choosing chaos instead. For now at least, they seem happy savouring the fat from the war.

In Vojislav Seselj's case, this is literally true. He has manoeuvred his burgeoning paunch into position before addressing the press in his new role as mayor of Zemun, a leafy Belgrade suburb on the banks of the Danube.

Both did President Milosevic's dirty work in Croatia and Bosnia, leading militias financed and armed by the Serbian police. Together they

gave full meaning to the phrase "ethnic cleansing". United Nations experts summed up their modus operandi in a report on war crimes. "Upon entering a village... Seselj and Arkan's troops would begin their reign of terror. In an overwhelming majority of the counties in which Seselj and Arkan's troops were operating, there were allegations of killing of civilians, rape, looting, destruction of private or cultural property, and prison camps."

Her associates have been using their connections to encroach upon the warlords' trading interests; Seselj and Arkan in turn have not hidden their pleasure at the ruling family's discomfiture. Nonetheless, they remain a symbiotic relationship with the regime. No one stays in business without its approval.

Seselj's Radical Party has emerged as a significant political force. In November's federal elections, the Radicals

were given more access to state television than the liberal opposition, and won 18 per cent of the vote. Unlike the gains by the Zajedno (Together) coalition in the local elections, Seselj's win in Zemun was allowed to stand.

In return, Arkan and Seselj have kept their supporters off the streets. "My heart is with the protests, but now is not the right time," Arkan said. Seselj, meanwhile, has pro-

jected himself as the responsible face of parliamentary opposition. "We need dialogue and debate in parliament to defuse tensions in the street," he told journalists.

The ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have reason to feel apprehensive, too. Western diplomats had been confidently predicting the restoration of self-government in Kosovo early next year, after it was made a precondition for the lifting of international financial sanctions.

Since the protests at the government's rigging of the November elections, a deal seems to have been put on the back-burner. President Milosevic can therefore cast the Albanians as hate-figures and relaunch himself as a nationalist hero. The ground has been laid: state television has alleged that "Albanian extremists" have been whipping up the street protests.

Seselj and Arkan have declared themselves ready to resuscitate their respective militias — the "Cetniks" and the "Tigers" — to defend the "greatness of Serbia, whether in Bosnia or Kosovo." "I think this is a real danger," said Sonja Biserko of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. "Everyone is watching the street protests, but these people are getting stronger."



Vojislav Seselj: Mayoral victory allowed to stand



Arkan: now charms punters at his casino

House Speaker admits breaching tax laws Gingrich fights for political survival

Richard Thomas in Washington

NEWT GINGRICH, the firebrand leader of the Republican right who was fighting for his political life yesterday after admitting he had given false information to a congressional ethics committee.

drop his bid next month to become the first Republican in 70 years to be re-elected Speaker. David Bonior, the House minority whip who has led the campaign against Mr Gingrich, said he did not deserve the speakership. "Contributions from Newt's rich friends to these groups were laundered back into his own empire," Mr Bonior said yesterday. "This was an attempt to defraud taxpayers. He should step aside."

After conducting a frantic telephone charm offensive, Republican Party leaders managed to generate a show of unity among rank-and-file congressmen, but there are growing fears that support for Mr Gingrich will erode between now and January 7, when he plans to seek re-election. Senior Republicans tried to play down the committee's findings. John Boehner, the Republican conference chairman, said: "These are just technical infractions of the rules. No serious charge has been made which could stop him standing for re-election."

German Speaker faces new 'air miles' claim

Denis Staunton in Berlin

SLEAZE allegations against the Speaker of the German parliament, Rita Süssmuth, took a new turn yesterday when newspapers reported that she had made more short- and medium-range flights on Luftwaffe jets than the foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel — including 14 since 1993 to the Netherlands, where she has a holiday home.

Ms Süssmuth is suing the Bild am Sonntag tabloid, which made the original allegations. But her lawyers admitted last week that she used a Luftwaffe jet to fly from Bonn to Zurich to see her daughter in October 1995. "To me, this is a breach of the guidelines. The Luftwaffe fleet may only be used for official purposes and that certainly does not include private celebrations," said Dieter Lau, vice-president of the Federation of Taxpayers.

Ms Süssmuth, who has published a list of all her official flights since she took office, yesterday repeated that she had done nothing wrong. "I do not retract an iota of what I said after the first allegations a week ago. I booked and paid for private trips to Switzerland through Luftwaffe and Swissair like any other citizen. Supervision is necessary. But campaigns are aimed at long-term damage."

Boris Becker's life was 'like the worst thriller'

Denis Staunton in Berlin

BORIS BECKER, complaining of racist threats to his black wife and three-year-old son, said last night he would leave Germany within the next three years. The tennis star, aged 29, said in a television interview that persistent threats had made him consider abandoning the sport for good.

Friends in a white society. We must make sure to create an environment where that is normal too, where it doesn't matter what colour you are," he said. He refused to comment on a raid last week by tax officials on his home in Munich, during which flowers were removed. Investigators are believed to suspect that he returned to Germany from tax exile in Monaco a few months earlier in 1994 than his tax declaration admits.

German sports stars, such as Mr Becker and Steffi Graf, whose father was arrested earlier this year on tax fraud charges, are obliged to pay federal and local taxes.

Manger mania in crib capital



nearby Aschen cultivated his crib mania more than 20 years ago, scouring the churches and villages of the Cologne region for fine specimens of the Christmas models, his followers have foraged way beyond the Rhineland, bringing cribs to Losheim from several continents.

"crib friends", was born. The Crib Club followed. After Mr Schelms died, his son Hubert carried on. The derelict factory became impracticable, so the cross-shaped Krippmann was built in Losheim.

"We've got Catholic cribs and Protestant cribs. We collect cribs from wherever Christmas is celebrated," said Alwin Morgens, who supervises the collection of about 200 models at the purpose-built cruciform building in Losheim.

Security forces yesterday stormed a prison in Jessore, Bangladesh, crushing a revolt by inmates in an operation which left at least five people dead, police said.

The raid ended the week-long uprising, the last of four in the country in the past week. — Reuters

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News in brief

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Advertisement for National Garden Gift Tokens. It features a central illustration of a gift basket overflowing with various garden items like plants, flowers, and tools. The text encourages buying gift tokens as Christmas gifts and lists participating garden centers. It also includes the logo for the National Garden Gift Tokens and the Horticultural Trade Association.

Keeping an eye on Hong Kong
Britain must take the lead

HONG KONG'S last months before it returns to the motherland will be anxious ones - even if the stock market continues to rise. By appointing a Provisional Legislature (ProVLeg) to supplant the one elected last year, China has ensured a difficult as well as bizarre political transition.

The real Legislative Council (LegCo) will continue to meet in Hong Kong while the ProVLeg convenes under red banners. More than half the members of one already belong to the other - including LegCo's president and his deputy. How will they arrange their diaries? How will they deal with conflicting proposals? It makes a farcical and worrying start to what is supposed to be a new age of confidence.

Hong Kong has become much more politically aware since the 1989 Beijing Massacre triggered public anxiety, but it is beginning to drift back to an earlier mood of cynical acceptance. The sentiment that "nothing can be done about it" - whether "it" is political stagnation, abuse of the law, or massive corruption - is already familiar on the mainland. As the South China Morning Post commented yesterday, if future opinion polls show growing support for the ProVLeg, "it is because Hong Kong people have been given no choice."

Chris Patten was right to describe the election of the ProVLeg as a farce in which members of the handpicked Selection Committee voted for one another and themselves in an absurd charade of democracy. But once again he expressed himself in a manner which will impress few people in Hong Kong and no one in Beijing. Analogies with the choice of a tennis club committee are better suited for the voters of Bath. To the end of his term, Mr Patten has been unable to grasp the difference between delivering double whisnies at home and communicating effectively with China.

The strong protest delivered by the Foreign Secretary is a different matter. Britain now has to take over the role of forthright critic which will become very difficult for the majority of Hong Kongers. Malcolm Rifkind was right not to criticise the selection by Beijing (through its handpicked committee) of the new Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. The Joint Declaration (JD) of 1984 was ambiguous on the method and it was always assumed this would be determined by Beijing. He is equally right to describe the new ProVLeg as not, in any reasonable sense, a legislature "constituted by elections" - as required by the JD. And Beijing is wrong to claim that Britain has no legitimate interest in Hong Kong after the handover. The Joint Liaison Group will function till the end of 1999, after which Britain still has a special duty to ensure that this internationally recognised agreement is properly observed.

The people of Hong Kong must hope that Britain's words are now more than a formality for the record. Everyone must also hope that those in Beijing who understand the need for reassurance will quietly prevail. The Chinese government still has a range of options. It can, and should, confine the role of the ProVLeg to passing only the most urgent laws (and not doing so before the actual handover). Serious issues should be left to the new LegCo which, on Beijing's own timetable, must be elected a year later. China also needs to clarify and confirm the election arrangements for this and future LegCos in its own Basic Law - which says half of the councillors will be directly elected in the year 2003, and that election of all members by universal suffrage is the "ultimate aim". The commitment is important because it ends hope that Hong Kong may still get there in the end.

End-of-term U-turns
Major's secret democracy

THE British political system, said John Major in a breakfast interview on Friday, is "the best in the world". He praised in particular its system of checks and balances. Viewers might be forgiven for choking over their cornflakes and croissants at such a brazen display of complacency.

Mr Major made his claims at the end of a week when ministers indulged in blatant manipulation of the parliamentary timetable. In the last days before the Christmas recess, they pushed through and slipped out a host of controversial measures to meet manufactured deadlines or avoid controversy. That is completely understandable from the point of view of the executive. It is hardly an example of healthy democratic practice. As MPs prepared to leave Westminster's febrile atmosphere, the Government published a controversial (and for laymen, that is to say, most MPs, a complex) report from Professor Caddy on contamination at the forensic laboratory at Fort Halstead. It had been available to the home secretary, for weeks - time to prepare his spin, notably that everything was fine and there was no need to question any previous convictions based on evidence processed there.

The Government also pushed through the Protection from Harassment Bill and introduced the Sex Offenders Bill. The Attorney-General Sir Nicholas Lyell announced, ten months after the Scott report, that in future Public Interest Immunity certificates - so-called gagging orders - would no longer be used simply to protect ministers from political embarrassment. It was an unobserved victory for Sir Richard and an 180 degree U-turn by the Government.

In another U-turn, Mr Howard announced that private security guards would henceforth have to be licensed. He also gave a superficial account, in a written parliamentary answer, to agreements made at a meeting last month by EU ministers on a raft of law and order issues. In another written answer, the Government confirmed the Guardian's disclosure, initially described by Mr Major as "disgraceful", that changes in war pension rules will hit veterans and save millions of pounds for the Treasury.

Yet throughout the week, Whitehall departments insisted they could not say a word to the media and other interested parties about the stream of statements, bills, and Government reports, until ministers had informed MPs. To do so, they explained without a hint of irony, would be a contempt of Parliament, an abuse of parliamentary privilege. Appearance is all.



Letters to the Editor

Town hall sums can't add up

YOU are right to argue that the Standard Spending Assessment is enormously complicated and in point to the centralising way in which the Standard Spending Assessments have operated (Town hall turns red, December 11). But you are wrong to claim that the civil servants enjoy complexity. It is because local government income now depends so much more on central government that there is pressure from those local governments on the centre to be much more precise, which leads to more complexity.

But the real problem with the current way of calculating the Standard Spending Assessment is not that they are complex but that, in many cases, they are simply wrong. Indeed, we would challenge the assertion that these cumbersome calculations are measuring need at all, as they are based on associations between expenditure and socio-economic conditions which are simply reproduced through the expenditure-capping mechanism from year to year. Whilst we also deplore the centralising mechanisms, we believe that the more precisely need is measured the more equitable the result. At the same time, all such assessments are subject to measurement uncertainty and it is important to display such uncertainty.

Peter Smith, University of St Andrews.
Harvey Goldstein, Institute of Education.
Roy Carr-Hill, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD.

One plus mum

MY SIX-year-old son was delighted when he worked out that my brother had two wives (one technically being an ex-wife). The new moral education curriculum (Moral education could lead to improved exam results, December 20) will lead him to another important discovery: his uncle is twice as moral as his aunties who have only been married once and three times as moral as his mother and father, who aren't married at all. No wonder moral education leads to higher academic results, it's a good deal more interesting than if Tom has two apples and Sheila has one...

Carol Sherriff, 43 Fordwich Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 5EY.

Who's the cleverest?

CONTRARY to your headline (Academics urged to be selective over research, December 20), Oxford did not pip Cambridge to top the league table of research in UK universities. In fact, Oxford pipped the Institute of Cancer Research which, having 51 per cent of its staff working in international standard research, lies between Oxford and Cambridge in your league table. What is more, another 20 institutions actually did better than Oxford or Cambridge on this basis.

The myth of Oxbridge research supremacy is maintained when, in reality, it is a "superleague" of institutions (all doing university teaching as well as research) who are the real research elite. All but four members of this superleague are affiliated to the University of London. They include all seven of the post-graduate medical institutes of the University which, until recently, were federated together as the British Post-graduate Medical Federation. Thanks to the reforms of London's medical education put into effect by Virginia Bottomley's Making London Better (sic) directive, the Federation is disbanded and all of

these institutes have been scattered to the winds of college within in the University. (Dr) Keith Snell, Scientific Secretary, Institute of Cancer Research, University of London.

YOU describe grades 3a and 3b of the universities' research league as being for "departments doing some work of national excellence". It is containing at least a few staff who are doing commendably well but who have not yet quite made it into the international research league.

More than is what was supposed to happen. The reality is different. Lancaster physics, for example, judged by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) as being the best in England (second in the US) in terms of its international impact factor. In research, has been ranked a 3a by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Note that the ISI, based in Philadelphia, is a genuinely independent body. Unlike the panels used for the UK exercise, it has no personal axes to grind and no particular interest in the outcome. Absurdities like this devalue the entire grading exercise.

They seem to suggest that, sadly, influence and prestige still count for more in this country than performance and achievement, objectively measured. Prof P V E McClintock, School of Physics and Chemistry, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YB.

A MAJOR effect of the Research Assessment Exercise has been to devalue teaching in higher education. Hence it is important to know the views on the subject of the chief executive of the HEFCE. The Prime Minister and social security ministers were at pains to make it clear that there were two separate issues: a package of simplification measures on which the Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions were already being consulted and new medical advice on hearing loss which Ministers were legally bound to accept. The veterans' organisations would have nothing to do with the Guardian's scare-mongering and said so. The statement in your leader that the Parliamentary Questions were released "when Parliament had risen and no MPs were around" is

Journalists under fire over war pensions scandal

SUPPOSE we should have expected that the Guardian would try to justify the unnecessary and widespread alarm you managed to sow amongst war pensioners by your cobbling together of partially-leaked documents (War pensions cover-up, December 5).

For you to suggest in your leader (December 20) that the figures in the answers to Parliamentary Questions on Monday are really what your correspondent was referring to in his story of 650 million "package of cuts in war pensions" is offensive sophistry. The Prime Minister and social security ministers were at pains to make it clear that there were two separate issues: a package of simplification measures on which the Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions were already being consulted and new medical advice on hearing loss which Ministers were legally bound to accept. The veterans' organisations would have nothing to do with the Guardian's scare-mongering and said so. The statement in your leader that the Parliamentary Questions were released "when Parliament had risen and no MPs were around" is

simply untrue. The Questions were laid by the Opposition for answer on a named day, December 16, two full days before Parliament rose. This is just another example of the blind man's bluff to which you treat your readers irresponsibly in the absence of informed reporting. Has your social services correspondent bothered to ask my department whether the figures contained in these answers were already in the public domain, or does he only believe things that turn up in plain brown envelopes? Clearly what irritates your correspondent is that the veterans' organisations who really understand the issue have not joined your ridiculous campaigning. I am M Mackay of Arbroath, Minister of State for Social Security, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a postal address. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

The secret's out

THERE are no Lodges in the House of Commons (Two Freemasons' lodges at Commons, claims author, December 19). There are two lodges primarily, but not exclusively, for MPs or people who work in and for Parliament, but they meet at Freemasons' Hall, One, New Wellcome, was founded in 1929 partly because it was felt that Labour MPs might appreciate the chance of secret Freemasonry in a London lodge. It is ironic that some of their successors feel that they may be de-selected because their constituents misunderstand Freemasonry. M B S Higham, Grand Secretary, United Grand Lodge of England, Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AZ.

MARTIN SHORT (Unsettled secret, December 20) implies that Neil Thorne was a Labour MP for Ilford South. He was, in fact, a Conservative member. Clr D R Sharma, 42 Charter Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG2 7AB.



Just a new crop of problems

YOU say that crops engineered for resistance to herbicide will allow less investment in chemicals (Gene swapping that engineers big returns, December 19). This does not appear to make sense. Surely the reason for increasing resistance to herbicides is to allow greater quantities of such chemicals to be used without damaging the crop? As such it represents a step backwards compared to more environmentally-friendly forms of weed control. Secondly, the sapping of population growth and shrinkage of areas under cul-

tivation is used as an argument for genetic engineering. Aside from the fact that the European Union and other Western agencies pay farmers not to grow food crops, consideration must be given to the way farmland and crops are used. This means not only the fact that intensive agri-business methods exhaust the land, but also that meat production consumes vast amounts of grain which could be used for feeding people. Philip Ward, 42 Crimesshorpe Road, Sheffield S4 8LE.

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: For years it was Arant Haw from Sedburgh, just giving us time to get back home for the Queen before the turkey, Christmas pudding and mince pies. Years before that it was often Helvellyn in the snow or, on the poor days - just to whip up an appetite - Loughrigg in the rain. But recently it has been Whitbarrow or even Arundale Knot to Far Arundale and back along the shore cliffs. Christmas Day is not usually the best day for the outdoors for many reasons but Arant Haw on a frosty morning with nobody about and a bit of snow to lighten the snow on the fells and ice on the Yorkshire dales and perhaps the distant sound of church bells - was not a bad preparation for the over-eating and television sprawling to follow. Last Christmas morning, with snow on the fells and ice on the pools, we went to Whitbarrow from Raven's Lodge, pausing on the way up through the woods to look at Ingleborough to the south-east, gleaming in the sunshine like a snow mountain in the Rockies.

A HARRY GRIFFIN

Why I have got the shooters in my sights

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

ALTHOUGH as plain men may, I have always believed that civilised people ought to watch their language - just to make sure that it is politically correct. The long overdue, and still incomplete, emancipation of gay men and lesbian women would have come about even more slowly if decent society had failed to condemn the terms of abuse and contempt which, 30 years ago, were said to be banter that "poofs" and "dykes" should accept in good humour. Without respect, there can be no social equality. It is not possible to call a man a "wee" or a "paki" and, at the same time, believe that he enjoys identical rights to those which are exercised by his white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant neighbour. I usually feel just the same about politically incorrect conduct. Men who insist on their inalienable right to treat

women in a way which reflects their masculinity normally believe that being male makes them innately superior to the female of the species. The problem is not that they lay on hands in an expression of sexual desire but as a statement of gender domination. Even as I write these unexceptional opinions, I can imagine a certain sort of man laughing behind his hand at the nonsense which is spouted by "wimmin's" groups and generally used by liberationists with close cropped hair, battle fatigues and Doc Martens. Since the critics of politically correct conduct feel so strongly about the need to defy the demands of fashionable causes, I hope that they will support me in my opposition to a new conformity which has, at least temporarily, relegated all other examples of proper verbal conduct to the second division of socially essential activities. It is currently necessary for all of us to be complimentary about members of gun clubs and men and women who take pleasure in shooting - especially if we want to toughen

the laws which regulate their conduct. No speech about the necessity for tighter gun control can decently be made without a preface which is essentially a paeon of unjustified praise. It is not enough to make the obvious point that most gun club members are not homicidal maniacs or that "sportsmen" who stalk and shoot animals are unlikely to progress into pathological misanthropists who stalk and shoot. Every time someone proposes that Parliament should prohibit the private ownership of hand guns or that sporting rifles should be kept in armories and not at home, an obsequious has to be made in the direction of men and women who enjoy the thrill of pulling the trigger. In modern folklore, they have become the sort of men our daughters would be lucky to marry, the type of woman we would be proud to bring up our sons, the kind of person we hope will manage our banks, lead our scout troops, captain our cricket teams and condescend to the creators of our wills. Indeed, the nation is

moving to a position in which it is generally accepted that, with one or two notable exceptions, shooters are better than the rest of us. Well, not me. In this particular, I am happy to be numbered in the ranks of the politically incorrect. Shooting is In a mature society, such bizarre behaviour would be left to the aristocracy an extraordinary way to pass the time and find pleasure - stivistic at best and, at worst, the expression of a violent personality. Have you seen the targets that some of these law abiding gun clubs use? They are cardboard cut-outs of undesirable - muggers, urban guerrillas and terrorists. "Bang you're dead." That is not a healthy game for little boys to play - even when they are trapped inside a

grown-up man's body. I do not suggest for a second that shooting pictures of human beings is an encouragement to do the real thing. But it is a strange hobby. It would not be right to prohibit it. However, there is no earthly reason why we should go on saying how much we admire people who fantasise about being Sergeant York and Annie Oakley. I know very well that many shooters do not waste their ammunition on inanimate targets but find their pleasure in killing rabbits, pheasant, grouse, partridge, duck, geese and geat. The editor of the Daily Telegraph, writing in defence of Prince William having stag's blood smeared on his face, seemed to think that there is something admirable about creeping up on an unsuspecting animal and blowing its brains out. But most people repudiate. I know, of course, that the nouveau riche only buy their tweeds and rent their pieces of moorland in order to ape the habits of their social superiors. What a pity that they do not have enough self-confidence to

assert that the champagne and smoked salmon - eaten while the corpses are still warm - makes the whole enterprise more offensive. The word that comes to mind is decadent. In a mature society, such bizarre behaviour would be left to the aristocracy and the Royal Family. These days, I have my doubts about the morality of killing for food - but not about killing for fun. That has to be wrong. When I am told that it would be unforgivable to treat gun owners as if they were criminals, I feel inclined to reply that I only wish to treat the Purdy owners as if they are emotionally inadequate or simply peculiar. Think of it. They go out on to the moors and shoot birds which have been specially bred for that purpose. Wild fowling is all night in boats on the Norfolk Broads, waiting for a chance to do a duck. I will not call their behaviour perverse as long as I am not expected to begin every comment on Dunblane and Hungerford with an assertion about how admirable most shooters are.

Freetown Diary

Claudia McElroy

More than 50 years later that naive colonialist Wilson, in Graham Greene's novel The Heart of The Matter, could return to Freetown's "Bedford Hotel" he would need a succession of gin-and-bitters to quell his bewilderment. The hotel — its proper name is the City Hotel — has a crumbling facade with a balcony...

"In the olden days, things actually worked here," said one dapper old gentleman, queuing in the city post office in his Sunday best of three-piece tweed suit and trilby hat. "We had a good administration, the best university in West Africa and even a railway. All that has gone now. You hardly dare admit it, but some aspects of colonialism weren't all that bad."

Now Sierra Leoneans finally see a ray of hope, albeit a waning one. The civilian government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, which came to power in March following the country's first democratic elections in almost 30 years, recently signed a peace agreement with the leadership of the Revolutionary United Front, paving the way for the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The agreement, echoing the RUF's professed Marxist ideology, boldly promises equal opportunities to all Sierra Leoneans and improvements in the quality of life by every means from free schooling and health care to quality housing and rural electrification.

President Kabbah, a retired UN veteran, appears confident in the face of widespread scepticism over whether foreign donors will be ready to foot the proposed bill of US \$1.1 billion for a five-year recovery programme. Yet neither money nor continuing reports of fighting in some areas seem to affect the almost-desperate optimism of some Sierra Leoneans. One resident of the City Hotel, an illicit diamond miner, is hopeful that there will soon be an upturn in his fortunes. "This peace agreement means that in 1997 Sierra Leone will once again enter a golden age... For the last five years I have not had a nice Christmas or New Year, but this year will be different. Now we all have a reason to celebrate."

Wilson spent his fictional Christmas 55 years ago (during the second world war) in his dinner suit and cummerbund, sipping gin cocktails. But he and the present hotel residents share one thing in common: a hope that the war will end and then they can return home.

You want for us to stay cool, already?

Commentary

Linda Grant

My grandfather would ask: "You want for me to sit down?" It was ungrammatical, though the substitution of "wish" for "want" would have made it sound regal, rather than the broken English it really was. My grandfather's control of the language of his adopted country was minimal. Both my parents had grown up speaking Yiddish at home, their voices saturated with its thought processes. I learned early that "I want you to be happy" meant one thing, but "I only want for you to be happy" was a sentence of menacing specificity, containing underneath it the unspoken, and hence more effectively transmitted thought: "But when I am dead and in my grave, I hope you'll remember that you broke your mother's heart."

I also understood that by turning every sentence into a question you could imply incredulity and, by emphasising different words, alter its meaning, such as the famous: "I want everything, now," says four-year-old Sarah, as she watches the ads and the programmes on children's TV. David McKie is visited by the ghost of Christmas present and the spirit of a culture of desire

"I was right? You were wrong? I should apologise?" So this was a household where vestiges of Yiddish language constructions were retained in our everyday speech and had to be carefully eliminated in such public arenas as school. And I still preserve fragments of a language I never really learned to speak, and I occasionally find myself producing from my mental dictionary a Yiddish word which has eagerly presented itself for use in a sentence crying: "Me, me, I am what you were looking for."

The other day mesach abruptly popped into my head, literally meaning man, broadly implying human speech. They denounce the "linguistic imperialism" which imposes a single, rigid, correct canon. That language is in a continuous state of flux and transformation is obvious to all those but the pedants who think that they are ones who made the rules. David Willet's attempts to get away with using the word "want" in a pre-20th-century manner to imply a lack rather than a need, shows how a slippery customer can use the slipperiness of meanings to his own ends. Willet thinks it makes him look more literate, not less, to use a word in an archaic manner. To others, it was proof he was a crook. The Oakland school board should also take heart from the fact that even in England,

the home of English, differing forms of linguistic construction continue. A few old-timers in Yorkshire still use thee and thou; the numerous mealtine confusions about tea and dinner and supper remind us that words are not ascribed the same meanings by different classes and in different parts of the country.

The working-class generation that was first able to take advantage of the 1944 Education Act's promise of free grammar school and university places would later remember their sense of shame when they were humiliated by teachers for their use of regional dialect and non-standard spoken sentences. It rendered them, one told me, literally speechless in class, too ashamed to put their hand up when they knew the answer to a question. They knew how to write

in a way that would get them through exams, they had formal language. But when they opened their gobs they talked as everyone around them at home did. It was habit. Welcome the vernacular, the musical, the vibrant, the vivid and the strange — whenever and wherever you hear it. Language without idiom and rule-breaking is like food without taste or flowers without colour. And rather the language of James Joyce than of John Birt. For if anyone is guilty of making language incomprehensible, it is not American blacks but

American management gurus who have introduced such mysteries as "business process re-engineering" which apparently means "doing it differently". And not content with that barbarism, they then confuse you further by taping it into "BPR", so then you really don't know what they're talking about. We used to have personnel officers. Now we've got human resource management directors, as if they were blowing up the little balloons of their selves to make them look as big and as important as possible. It is a fine example of the way elites unilaterally create their own languages to exclude others. No grammatical pedantry there, when it suits them.

Every group has its own forms of speech and we are all the time, exchanging goblets of our verbal selves with each other as, in the streets, languid English hippies cooking lentil mashes in Welsh communes used expressions borrowed from Californian hippies, who got them from the New York beats, who copied them from the era of their own youth, the forties be-bop jazz scene, man.

Which, when you think of it, is pretty cool, as the be-bop guys also used to say — but that skipped the sixties and didn't reappear again until the nineties. One of the joys of talking is making languages that are not mutually exclusive or accredited with a certificate of social authorisation. And so there's nothing wrong with the black schoolchildren of California hanging on to whatever they have left of a distant mother tongue. But few of us speak enough language and the best advice one can offer them is to take every chance they can of being bilingual. Why replace Wasp standard English with African-American standard English? To hell with standards.

labourers are not the ordinary women who still do most of the cooking and domestic work. But the new stars: the chefs. Every channel boasts a dipsomaniac doing exotic things with mangoes. The main ingredients for a successful TV chef are the size of the personality and the ability to create authored food — food in a recognisable individual style. Chefs are the drag queens of the nineties, doing what women do routinely, but dressing it up, making it a performance. There is a lot resting on these chefs. They have to re-stimulate flagging interest, the detumescent appetite confronted with Escal, salmonella and BSE. For the Marxist Lentilists have been proved right, and politics has entered the kitchen. The chefs have to be like wizards turning dress to gold by an alchemical process. They have to transform our basic food — now perceived as dangerous, spoiled and degraded — into a meal which can inspire us.

The chefs make this transformation look spectacular and fun, without drawing attention to the female drudge which usually lies behind it. No wonder women only spend half an hour a day in the kitchen. The spectacularisation of cooking has driven them out. The excessive emphasis on the performance of cooking and the presentation of the food discourages women who have to do the domestic labour. No one could possibly hope to achieve about food is steadily increasing. Culinary light-years have passed since Elizabeth David gently chided the British for limited horizons and low arousal rates. Stranded amidst the rationing and exhaustion of post-war Britain, she fantasised about the food and lifestyles of the Mediterranean.

Now we live in the world of David's gastro-erotic imagination. There are cookery books about every national cuisine, writers who write seductively about food, and publishers who anthologise their prose in bite-sized chunks. Television binges feature in daytime and peak time. Affluence, travel and increased leisure allowed cookery to float free from the purely functional or gaily literary. Visual stimulation, with close-ups and exotic settings, added extra frissons. Now food stylists, using glycerine, emphasise the perfect climax, rather than the messy business of getting there. The best-selling River Café Cookbook epitomises this designer-led approach to food. Domestically impractical recipes are the benchmark of fashionable cookery. As a recent New Yorker cartoon put it: "Your check, sir — on a bed of poisons." On television, the spectacle of cooking always threatens to degenerate into the sweaty, unglorious process of work that it is. But this real work never appears. Television's kitchen

Clear those chefs out of my kitchen now



Ros Coward

Do titillating images of food stimulate people to cook? Apparently not. Although we are bombarded with explicit television programmes showing other people doing it, and the bookshops are groaning with manuals, the actual amount of time women spend in the kitchen is shrinking.

With Christmas almost upon us, all that will have to change. Since we now celebrate The Meal rather than The Birth, the planning and execution of the perfect Christmas meal is probably the most important ritual in our irreligious culture. Magazines are full of idealised imagery encouraging the right settings, wine, and props. Women who might normally fake a headache to get out of cooking become fetishists coming down to the perfect climax. The importance of the Christmas meal is only the culmination of the general significance which food has assumed in our culture. The time spent cooking may be declining, but the time spent thinking about food is steadily increasing. Culinary light-years have passed since Elizabeth David gently chided the British for limited horizons and low arousal rates. Stranded amidst the rationing and exhaustion of post-war Britain, she fantasised about the food and lifestyles of the Mediterranean.

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SO WHEN Christmas arrives with its annual ritual of The Meal, women do not look to the male tele-chefs. Then, like the return of the repressed, out come the copies of Della Smith's Christmas, Della is television's anti-fetish — a woman who, with her over-the-top personality, compared with Elizabeth David or Claudia Rodin and their insight into other cultures, she is a dreary writer. But with good visual props and a recognisable domestic setting, she alone brings the old functional feminine domesticity into the new visual spectacle. Della survives in the world of culinary drag artists because sexual relations in most real kitchens are largely un-reconstructed. Her recipes work, and there are times when cooking can no longer be a voyeuristic spectacle. At Christmas, as with many other social rituals, women are left to do the majority of the planning and most of the work. Then, as in other important areas, women prefer someone who does the business, rather than brags about it. A cook, rather than a chef.

'I want everything, now,' says four-year-old Sarah, as she watches the ads and the programmes on children's TV. David McKie is visited by the ghost of Christmas present and the spirit of a culture of desire



The engine of envy

AN uninviting pre-Christmas Saturday morning: too cold for the park. Thank goodness there's children's television to keep Sarah, aged 4, entertained. A whole hour of dependable Disney sounds just what the (temporary) child-minder ordered. Though it isn't as if it transpires, the cartoons which rouse Sarah to the highest excitement. It's the ads. It is all one can do to detach her nose from the screen and manoeuvre her chair back to safe watching distance. There are videos to be had featuring dinosaurs, and building systems, and, above all, there are Barbie dolls. After each, the response is the same: "I want THAT."

But you can't have everything, Sarah. A moment ago it was dinosaurs: now it's Cinderella's castle... But Sarah has a ready and logical answer. "That" — chubby fingers pointing to Cinderella's castle — "is what I want now." It isn't only the advertised merchandise, either. The equivalent of the hour's editorial content — the basic Disney diet of programmes — is full of trigger points, too. The Disney Corporation may be there to make the world happy, but it's equally there to milk the spin-off potential. Here are children much like Sarah having the time of their lives at Disney World. "I want to go there now." "I begin. Can't I go now?" "Can't you take me today?" But I've hardly begun

to explain the logistical difficulties in this course, even were it desirable, when Sarah is off again. There's a Barbie doll on the screen. THROUGHOUT the recession, politicians of the left, if that's still an appropriate term, have argued that rising crime is only to be expected when many are condemned to live without work or prospect of work, when there's no longer any visible route out of poverty. Politicians of the right — give or take the odd acknowledge which escaped from the odd Kenneth Clarke before anyone got there to smother him — have denied it. Research has been paraded: other research, supporting conclusions which ministers would rather not see supported, has been suavely suppressed. But throughout, the right has countered with a response apparently designed to suggest that they are the true defenders of the poor and the unemployed, while those on the left who claim to support them patronise and demean them. Go back they say, to the slump when poverty and deprivation were far more savage than today, and look at the crime figures then. There was no explosion. Desperate as they were, the victims of recession continued to honour the law and the rights of others. Therefore to argue now that the poor and the unemployed are tempted to crime by their poverty is a vile and under-considered insult to those thousands of people who continue

to cope whatever their deprivations, and also, of course, to a standard of government welfare provision which has given the unemployed standards of living their equivalents of the twenties would have looked on as luxury. That, at least, was an argument those who believed in the link between unemployment and crime had to stop and think about. If cause and effect didn't work this way in the twenties and thirties, why should they do so now? But then in the twenties and thirties they didn't have television, and they didn't have GMTV on Saturday morning offering children like Sarah a whole consumer agenda around which you could frame your Christmas demands. Clearly, the poor of the twenties and thirties were aware that others lived lives of ease and opulence, while theirs was all struggle.

But children didn't grow up with this engine in the sitting room corner, rubbing it in hour by hour. They didn't on Saturday morning see children much like themselves up on a screen, taking for granted possessions which might never be theirs. They weren't confronted with any equivalent of romping Saboteurs, available in replica from McDonald's, on inside every happy meal box — yours, if you can only persuade mum and dad to take you for a burger 101 times. Or the new console game, as

recommended in one radio ad for the child who's already got a personal CD, a TV in the bedroom, a computer, and most of the old console games. You see it: you want it; and if you don't get it, there will be others at school that will. Five Barbies is no longer enough, when Samantha has seven and Emily nine. There is nothing that Conservative politicians despise quite as much as envy: but what else can one expect when such powerful engines, programmed to generate envy, are stationed in every home? The pressures all this creates are abundantly documented. Research published last week showed that parents in poorer localities spent more on their children at Christmas than those in well-heeled suburbs, and not just on a relative basis, in real terms, too. The average parent in somewhere like Knowsley lashed out while the average parent in somewhere like Richmond-on-Thames was full of cautious restraint. No doubt someone by now has started work on a pamphlet for the Social Affairs Foundation condemning this as yet one more demonstration of the hopeless improvidence of those who claim on the state. And yet it is hardly surprising. The more miserable your children's condition through the rest of the year, the stronger the temptation to try to make it up to them on this one special day. And the greater, too, the prospect of family turmoil if generous instincts are choiced.

SARAH is not very different from thousands of other four-year-olds. The god-daughter of a friend, at three, shows an extra sophistication, not only announcing "I want that," but adding "available at all good toyshops". When wishes are asked for at a church children's Christmas party, the first two respondents make pious responses: peace for the world, and recovery for all sick children in hospital. But number three wants a Barbie doll; and after that, anything goes. It is part of their culture: part of the culture which we create for them. Through the Thatcher years "I want it, I'm going to have it" was a statement of almost religious significance. Such attitudes were a sine qua non of economic prosperity, destined to benefit not only richly-rewarded thrusters but all of us, even the poor, as wealth trickled down. Even now, there are those eager to remind us that the whole point of staging Christmas is all to give people things to want. Some have complained this year that most Advent calendars have nothing to do with the birth of Christ. But that is outrageous thinking. As David Hamilton, chairman of Link Licensing, which markets the Barbie calendar, told the Sunday Times, other characters are not really different to images of Christ: "It does not matter whether it is Barbie or the little Lord Jesus, it is the process of opening the windows in anticipation of Christmas that is important." I really must ask her mum to explain that to Sarah.

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Norman Le Brocq

A singular man of the Islands

NORMAN Le Brocq, who has died aged 74, was a remarkable man, the only Communist deputy in the Jersey parliament through much of the cold war. In the conservative political culture of the Channel Islands, he stoutly remained a radical all his life, yet his integrity and sincerity won him many admirers even among those who most vehemently disagreed with his ideological views.

His commitment to the less well-off in one of the richest communities in Europe was unwavering during more than 50 years of political activism. He espoused many causes long before they became fashionable, and served Jersey and its interests on innumerable committees and charitable bodies. For this public service and for his brave participation in the small resistance networks during the second world war occupation by the Germans — always recounted with great modesty — he became a Jersey legend.

Unlike the men who have traditionally dominated Channel Island politics, Norman Le Brocq was not born into a wealthy or powerful family and achieved his influence through hard work and determination. Nothing was ever easy. He won a scholarship to Victoria College and as a precociously bright teenager became a Communist — a commitment which lasted until his death.

During the 1940-45 Nazi occupation, while many Islanders preferred to keep their heads down Le Brocq, with a tiny group of fellow Commu-

nists and trade unionists, ran an extremely dangerous pamphleteering operation with digests of BBC news and allegations of corruption in the island government. Print runs were about 300-400. Even more dangerous was the mutiny that Le Brocq — and his girlfriend, later to become his wife — was helping to organise in May 1945 with Communists and socialists in the German garrison.

Ultimately the plans came to nothing because the war ended and the islands were liberated. For his resistance activities, Le Brocq received a gold watch from the Soviet government from the British government and the island administration, he received no recognition.

THROUGHOUT his life, he was a superb source of information on the occupation, patiently helping dozens of journalists and documentary-makers to grasp something of its complexity. Invariably, people appreciated his refreshing bluntness. Le Brocq was a proud and devoted Jerseyman but that didn't stop him criticising the wartime record of the island government and his fellow Islanders.

He was a rare islander for talking honestly about the seamy, less than honourable side of the occupation — collaboration, black marketeering and informing.

He first stood for the States, the Jersey parliament, in 1945 when he was a member of the Jersey Democratic Movement — a political group calling for widespread political reform born out of the wartime frustra-

tion over collaboration and black marketeering by the island authorities. But it took him another 21 years to win a seat. Initially he was shunned by fellow members, but gradually he won respect. As a working stonemason he had to take time off to sit in the States and had to ask for donations from his supporters to maintain his family.

For the next 21 years he was in and out of the States, serving on several key committees, always passionately interested in the island's development and in particular, the environment. He was a president of the National Trust for Jersey and always claimed that one of the achievements of which he was most proud was blocking Isle of Man TT-type motorcycle racing coming to one of the prettiest parts of Jersey. Fishing limits with France and agricultural pollution were also areas to which he devoted much of his time.

He retired from the States in 1967 and pursued his interest in Age Concern, as well as remaining president of the Channel Island Co-operative Society, from 1968-85.

His interest in welfare policy was evident only recently when he joined a review group set up this year under the auspices of the Dated Nations' International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, to look at Jersey's parish welfare system. He leaves a wife, Rosalie, and three children.

Madeleine Bunting
Norman Le Brocq; politician; born August 1, 1922; died November 25, 1996



Honesty and integrity ... Norman Le Brocq, who devoted his life to the Channel Islands

Arthur Jacobs

Delighting in the detail

NO one among the fraternity of music writers had such an encyclopaedic mind or such a command of facts and figures as Arthur Jacobs, who has died of cancer at the age of 74. Nothing escaped his gaze, which made him an ideal compiler of reference books and an excellent biographer. He is sure to be remembered for his definitive biographies of the composer Sir Arthur Sullivan (1984) and the conductor Sir Henry Wood (1984), which in each case brought the subject vividly to life.

Jacobs first came to public attention as a very young and challenging critic on the Daily Express. For instance, his dislike of Brahms was made abundantly clear. Later he contributed well-informed criticism to a number of newspapers, among them the Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph and Financial Times, although his sometimes idiosyncratic views may have kept him from ever again becoming a regular critic. That was probably the public's gain, for it meant that his immense industry could be channelled into the translations and many reference books with which he became involved. Seminal among them was the massive *Dictionary of Music*, which was published in 1988 and ran into many revised editions, the most recent appearing only this year. He managed to include a wealth of information in a comparatively small amount of pages. For Penguin he also edited *Choral Music* (1980), which covered the whole gamut of choral works through the centuries.

He also compiled, with Stan-

ley Sadie, *The Pars Book of Opera* (1984), a pioneering and authoritative volume at a time when opera was far less popular than it has become today. *The British Music Yearbook*, which he edited from 1971 to 1979, was a mine of useful information. He was on the editorial board of *Opera* magazine from 1962 until his death.

As a translator, his French was fluent and witty, which explains why he was asked to turn into English as many as 20 librettos. He tended to respect the original text but never slavishly so and wrote one libretto of his own, to Maw's opera *One Man Show*. Perhaps his greatest love, among many, was Russian opera.

Jacobs was Manchester born and bred, studying at the famous Grammar School from where he went to Merton, Oxford, thence to the army before he started his career after the war.

He also became an eminent teacher at the Royal Academy

of Music (1964-79) and then head of music at Huddersfield Polytechnic (later University), which made him professor. He was latterly visiting scholar at Wolfson College, Oxford, a good base for his writing career.

Jacobs was an illuminating, often deliberately argumentative writer and speaker. He loved to challenge received opinions and liked nothing so much as to disconnect a reader or colleague with an outlandish view. Yet he was also generous to a fault and an absolute fanatic in the matter of giving the young the wherewithal to improve themselves. He always wrote lucidly and with an enthusiasm for his subject that communicated itself to his audience. He is survived by his wife and their two sons.

Alan Blyth
Meredith Oakes writes: He was a musicalologist, Marxist Brother, wild-eyed, enthusiastic, candid, lunging into rooms and leaning against furniture at a 45 degree angle. I worked for him on the *British Music Yearbook*, which he invented: it listed musicians and musical organisations, and was bought, borrowed or stolen by everyone in the business. Hardly his most glamorous source of income. Still he brought it alive with his passion for accuracy, not a neu-

rotic passion, but an exhilarating belief that information is history and history is helpful.

"She's good!" he'd say beamingly of some proof-reader who'd found an extra sentence. It was amazing, the satisfaction he got from editorial competence: but logical, because he took the skillful marshalling of data to be one of the hallmarks of civilised life. Later, as England got nastier, the publishers realised that the book would still sell if reduced to the most basic listing of names and addresses, renewed by an automatic mailing, and Arthur lost interest.

The job interview: all I remember is Arthur looking at my CV and saying, "Do you actually read German? Read this," and me reading it and Arthur giving me the job. "How much German will I need?" I asked. "Well," said Arthur, "none, but people are always saying they know German and they don't." He liked words to be true, dealings to be straight and people to treat each other affectionately, without pulling rank.

Knowledgeable and opinionated but not pompous, he rated his opinions below the useful facts he collected. He never ceased to put services before self-promotion.

Arthur Jacobs, musicologist; born June 14, 1922; died December 18, 1996

work of an Aberdeenshire schoolmaster, Gavin Greig, and has been in Aberdeen University Press since the beginning of the century. Those of us who could not imagine how we could ever get it into print and provide it with the recognition which it deserved, were aghast when Robert Maxwell bought the rights to the series. The story of its triumphant publication, through many people's efforts, deserves a book in itself.

Peter came most strongly into my life when my husband, Norman Buchan, set out on his second collection of Scottish songs. The first, *101 Scottish Songs*, had been a nightmare in transcribing, from the singer to the notation required for the printed page. So Norman asked Peter to come to his rescue, and he agreed to be co-editor of *The Scottish Folk-Singer*. Peter's skill and musicality in taking the grass notes with which traditional singers embroidered their sung ver-

Peter Hall

Always an ear for song

AT the funeral of the musician and folklorist Peter Hall, who has died aged 80, Bach's *Double Concerto for Violin in D Minor* was played first — and last in his fine eulogy Peter's friend Sandy Hobbs explained how Peter had thought it a fitting piece of music for such an event.

Peter was born in London. His mother came from the North-east of Scotland and his father from north-east England — where Peter was schooled. In 1935 he went to Aberdeen University initially to read medicine. After national service he read for a science degree, trained as a teacher and taught physics.

Teaching was his day job, but he was soon caught up in the amazing world of north-east Scottish song. Peter was a socialist, a humanist and a Campaign for Nuclear Dismament activist. Out of all these strands came songs and singers which resonated for him, with similarly radical songs from the past. He played several instruments, sang, and befriended singers like Lizzie Higgins and Jimmy Macbeath.

In 1967 he set up the Gangers group, which performed the music of the region, and released two albums in the 1970s. He was a founder member of the Aberdeen Folk Club, wrote for many magazines, was the original editor of the folk magazine *Chapbook*, and edited music from the people of the region. His tape recordings of song and stories encompassed more than 600 works. In 1986 he finished his master's thesis, *Folk Songs of North East Fife, 1800-1900*, which is still, regrettably unpublished.

But out of this came his co-editing in 1987 of the *Greig Duncan Collection* for which he also provided the introduction. The 3,500-song collection was



Full of folk ... Peter Hall, devoted scholar

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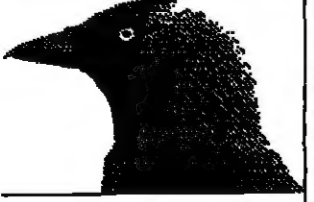
sions was marvellous to see and hear.

He was also just as interested in the fact that my transcribing father played the concertina in a band which rehearsed in a wash-house. The re-emergence of the concertina as an acceptable accompaniment to the singer was a great pleasure to talk with him about. And if music — classical, folk, jazz — was a major part of Peter's life and what he gave to it, then laughter didn't come far behind.

In 1969 he married Marion Macdonald, who became an eminent Aberdeen gynaecologist. She and their children have lost a warm loving husband and father. We have all lost a friend, and traditional music has lost an able and devoted scholar.

Janey Buchan
Peter Hall, folklorist and musician; born June 23, 1916; died December 5, 1996

Jackdaw



Double crossed

IN February 1986 Mrs Rukhsana Patel of Bolton became convinced that Allah would provide a special message for her to demonstrate how He was involved in the whole natural world. Her faith was rewarded when she bought an aubergine from a local mobile shop and on cutting it open, discovered the seeds spelled out the phrase "Allah exists in Arabic". Before long the allegedly divine vegetable was attracting about 50 pilgrims a day. Mrs Patel planned to leave the aubergine on display at her local mosque for a few weeks, after which it would be shared out among

the faithful and eaten raw. Every Good Friday the village of San Fernando in the Philippines holds a re-enactment of Christ's crucifixion. Local Catholics allow themselves to be nailed to crosses for a brief period of painful but sweat-painful. This year Shinichiro Kameko from Japan asked to join the ceremony, in the hope that his suffering would persuade God to heal his critically ill younger brother. San Fernando's church agreed.

But Mr Kameko was not a believer and had no sick relatives needing divine assistance. He was a paragon actor specialising in sadomasochistic roles, and his crucifixion is to be released on video. *The Fortean Times* *Weird Year 1996* rounds up a few of the odder religious stories proving the miracle *Madonna on the video screen in Clearwater, Florida is no neocromer.*

Dog tale
BY THE time I was nine I had been lobbying hard for a dog for a year or two. My father and mother were hoping that

I would outgrow this longing given enough time. I could see this hope in their eyes and it steeled my resolve, intensified my desire. What did I want for Christmas? A dog. What did I want for my birthday? A dog. What did I want on my ham sandwich? A dog. It was a deeply satisfying look of expectation they shared at such moments, and if I couldn't have a dog, this was the next best thing.

Life continued in this fashion until finally my mother made a mistake, a doozy of a blunder born of emotional exhaustion and despair. She would have preferred a happy child. One spring day after I'd been badgering her pretty relentlessly, she sat me down and said, "You know a dog is something that you own." My father heard this, got up, and left the room, grim acknowledgment that my mother had just conceded the war. Her idea was to make the dog conditional. The conditions to be imposed would be numerous and severe and I would be incapable of fulfilling them, and so when I didn't get the dog it would be my own fault. This

was her logic, and the fact that she thought such a plan might work illustrates that some people should never be parents and she was one of them.

I immediately put into practice a plan of my own to wear my mother down. Unlike bears, my plan was simple and flawless. Mornings I woke up talking about dogs and nights I fell asleep talking about them. When my mother and father changed the subject, I changed it back. "Speaking of dogs," I would say, a forkful of my mother's roast passed at my lips, and I'd be off again. Maybe no one had been speaking of dogs but, never mind, we were speaking of them now. At the library I checked out half a dozen books on dogs every two weeks and left them lying open around the house. I pointed out dogs we passed on the street, dogs on television, dogs in the magazines my mother subscribed to. I discussed the relative merits of various breeds at every meal. My father seldom listened to anything I said, but I began to see signs that the underpin-

ality were beginning to corrode in the salt water of my tidal persistence and when I judged that she was nigh to complete collapse I took every penny of the allowance money she had been saving and spent it on a dazzling bejewelled dog-collar-and-leash set at the overpriced pet stores around the corner.

Richard Russo writing in the New Yorker on terrible tactics for obtaining the desired present, something many parents around the country must be experiencing now.

Never names
TURKEY Trot, Arkansas. Slapout, Alabama (a one-store/post office combination, at a cross roads). Rooster Foot, Mississippi. Elephant Butte, NM. North East Farm, Servants in Texas (there was an earlier settlement called Old Hooker Ridge. The Cemetery Sign there is "Old Hooker Cemetery"). John Whitney & Juanita Sug-gins provide a few of the more bizarre places you might want to send a postcard home from.

Fame game

THE advanced state of celebrity culture has resulted in a continuum in which three states of celebrity are possible: there's Franchise Celebrity in which the celebrity capitalises on the brand value of his or her name (Sylvester Stallone); Conceptual Celebrity, in which a person gains fame not through work



Vegging out ... Fortean Times

but through events of his or her life (Elizabeth Taylor); Hybrid Celebrity, in which both the someone's career and life contribute to their celebrity (President Clinton and Mrs Clinton). In a year sandwiched between the finish of the OJ Simpson criminal trial and the start of the wrongful-death suit filed by the families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman against the former football star, the top 20 of the Observer 500 suggests that New Yorkers are giving a lot of thought to morality these days.

In a celebrity-obsessed, entertainment-driven society "celebrity is completely amoral," said Mr Gahler. "The only things we value are those that provide entertainment value."

"It doesn't make any difference whether you're OJ Simpson, Timothy McVeigh or Jack Nicholson. So long as you're entertaining us, that's all we care about. If you stop entertaining us, then we stop caring about you."

In absolute terms, yes, both the star of Emma and the man

Alexander Kelly

AALEXANDER Kelly, who has died aged 57, devoted most of his life to teaching music, but as a solo pianist he gave many first performances around the world, including Peter Wshart's *Piano Concerto*.

He was brought up in Edinburgh and started to learn the piano at the age of four. At 16 he won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music and studied under Harold Caxton. After national service with the Army Education Corps — where he managed to continue his studies by finding an isolated room with a piano on which he could "practise for hours without disturbing anyone" — he accompanied a number of leading singers including Mavis Lebane and performed extensively in piano trios and quartets, and violin and cello sonatas. His solo career included a CPE Bach concerto under Beecham at the Royal Festival Hall and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* at the Wigmore Hall and Edinburgh Festival.

Kelly returned to the Royal Academy of Music in 1960 as a professor of piano, becoming head of the department in 1964. He believed that the primary purpose of a conservatoire was to develop the performance skills of young musicians and disagreed with the increasingly academic demands being placed on his students. This was a source of growing frustration for the time of his 1994 retirement.

In 1979 he surprised those closest to him by entering the Roman Catholic church; he said he had been pushed into it by God.

Since his schooldays he wrote poetry, and *Visitations*, which he originally published in Dublin in 1968, has been recently reprinted. After his retirement, Kelly continued to be much in demand, conducting at piano competitions, giving masterclasses on Classic FM and teaching at home. His last concert recital — Schubert and Beethoven — was this October in Ipswich with the cellist, Nicholas Cooper.

He leaves his wife, Margaret, a distinguished cellist, and two daughters. Music was a family affair.

Simon Moonfield

Alexander Kelly, pianist and teacher; born June 30, 1929; died October 23, 1996

Birthdays

Emperor Akihito of Japan, 63; Michele Alboreto, racing driver, 40; Christian Blackwell, former chairman, Civil Service Selection Boards, 77; Sir Norman Biggs, banker, 88; Lord Blake, historian, 80; Robert Bly, American men's writer, 70; Peter Davis, former chairman, Reed International, 85; Maurice Denham, actor, Ianther Grosvenor, rock guitarist, 47; John Guinness, chairman, British Nuclear Fuels, 61; Yonsuf Karsh, portrait photographer, 88; Graham Kelly, chief executive, the Football Association, 51; Prof Peter Macdonald, president, Royal College of Pathologists, 85; Belinda Lang, actress, 43; Christopher Lawrence, silver-smith, 60; Judy Leden, hanger-glider, 87; Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor, West Germany, 78; Queen Silvia of Sweden, 53.

Death Notices

Miss Gladys "Bessie" died 17th December 1996. She was the only daughter of Charles Lough and the wife of James Lough. She was born in the town of Bessie, Co. Wick. She was a devoted mother and a loving wife. She is survived by her son, James Lough, and her daughter, Mary Lough. Buried in the cemetery at Bessie, Co. Wick.

In Memoriam

LANG, Violet. Passed away 22nd of December 1996. She was a wonderful mother and a loving companion. She is missed by all who loved her. Buried in the cemetery at Bessie, Co. Wick.

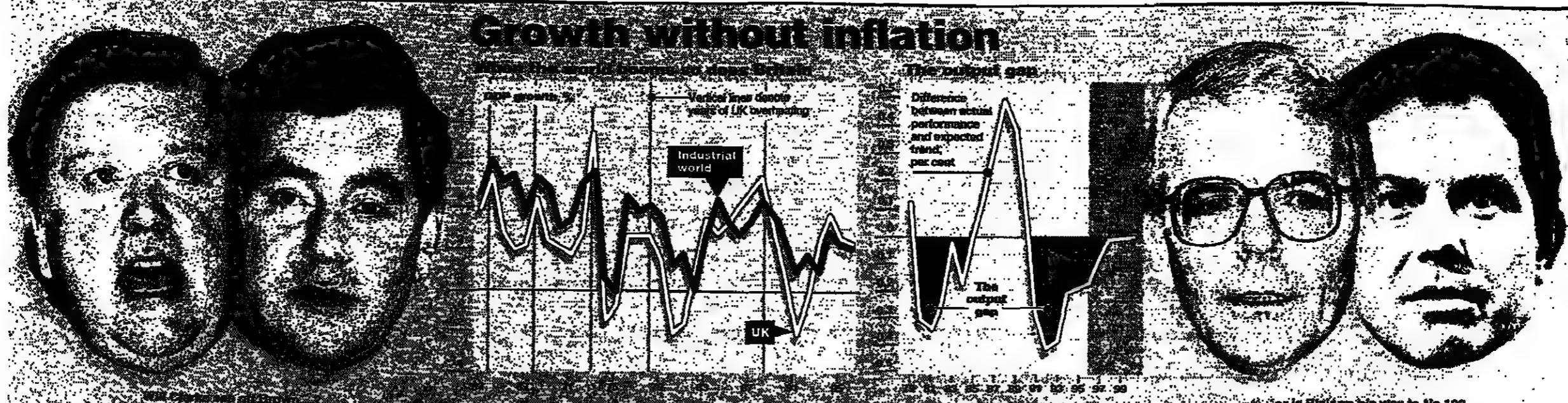
Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Treasurer, Love Simon. 87th year anniversary telephone 0171-713 4128 between 9am and 10am-7pm.

Jackdaw wants Jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

50 كتاب الامل



Shop-till-you-drop tendency goes to polls



Larry Elliott

ALAN BUDD, the chief economist at the Treasury, has his own rule of thumb for assessing what's going on in Britain's shopping malls. At the depth of the early 1990s recession, he found that although the Lakeside centre in Essex was packed, few people were actually carrying bags.

Budd's law — it's the number of bags not the number of people that count — came to mind last week on a visit to a wine merchant in London's West End. A customer marched in and asked for two bottles of a rare 30-year-old single malt whisky. "No, make it three", he said. "Why not?"

To an economy watcher, what was interesting about this little episode was not so much the cost — the bill came to a whopping £289 — but the "why not?"

Of course, it's just one incident in a place far from representative of the country as a whole. But three or four years ago, there was no "why not?" going on anywhere by anyone.

These days, the ratio of bags to consumers certainly seems to have gone up a bit. The size of the "why not?" tendency is vital for the economy's prospects in 1997, and it may still have a bearing on politics as well.

Consumer spending will be the driving force behind growth next year and if consumers are "why notting" from Inverness to Penzance, it could mean that the economy will expand even faster than the 3.5 per cent expected by the Government.

The Treasury believes that growth rates of 3.5 per cent next year and 3.0 per cent in 1998 are feasible because there is still some slack in the economy, amounting to around 1.5 per cent of GDP. This will be used up by the expansion of the next two years, after which the economy will settle back to its long-term trend of 2.5 per cent.

There are those who think this is just a bit too fat. For a start, there is no real evidence that the economy's long-term trend growth rate has picked up to 2.5 per cent as a result of the supply-side changes of the 1980s, as the Government claims. Second,

estimating the slack in the economy — the so-called output gap — is a very imprecise science. It may be that the economy is already running at full capacity, certainly the British chambers of commerce are starting to complain of skills shortages.

The pessimists draw parallels with 1987, a pivotal year for the economy. At the time, it seemed that everything was at last going right for the Government after a distinctly sticky patch at the start of the decade. Growth was strong, inflation low and unemployment coming down at a rate of knots. There were signs of overheating as the year wore on — house prices and the current account, in particular — but few people paid them any heed. The Conservatives won the June election by more than 100 seats.

Ten years on, and the economy is again in a benign phase of an upswing, with unemployment falling, growth above trend, inflation low, and house prices starting to climb. Of course, there are differences. Privatisation is no longer the force it was, earnings growth is weaker and, as things stand, it is Labour rather than the Conservatives who are on course for a landslide election win.

But, make no mistake, 1997 is going to be a key year. It will test whether there has been a sea change in Britain's economic performance or merely a short-lived interlude before the age-old problems of capacity shortages lead to a mismatch between demand and supply.

There are plenty of commentators out there convinced that the bond markets are right to be warning of a rise in inflation. The money supply is expanding by almost 11 per cent a year, real personal disposable incomes rose by 4.5 per cent in the year to the third quarter, and CBI expects manufacturers to push up their prices in the new year.

In some ways, these misgivings are well founded. Even without the windfalls from building society mergers, we should expect consumption to be strong in 1997, particularly since a fall in the savings ratio, triggered by low inflation and falling unemployment, looks long overdue.

The Chancellor's Budget forecast for consumption may prove to be a little conservative and it would be no surprise if it turned out to grow by 5 rather than 4 per cent. The other component of demand that may show a sharp increase is investment. Admittedly, this requires a leap of faith. Every year since the recession ended, the Treasury's Red Book has been predicting a surge in investment and every year the hopes have proved groundless.

Figures released on Friday showed that manufacturing investment down 1.6 per cent in the third quarter and 16.3 per cent over the year.

But with the likelihood of above-trend growth in 1997 and 1998, the long-awaited investment spurt could be about to begin. The British corporate sector is never very clever about the timing of investment, preferring to lash out at the peak of activity rather than in downturns. What is more, on past form, it is unlikely to last.

But with consumption and



investment likely to be higher than earlier expected, surely, the inflation bears say, that means that price rises must be set to accelerate also. Well, not necessarily.

As the economists at UBS point out in their recent overview, the sharp increase in sterling has administered a large degree of tightening over the past six months.

They say the downbeat prospects for the rest of the global economy will prevent Britain from overheating. As their graph (see above) shows, the UK only booms when the rest of the world does. In 1988, for example, the US expanded by 3.75 per cent, West Germany by 3.5 per cent and France by 4.5 per cent. It would be a miracle if any of that trio managed a similar performance in 1997.

Nor is there any indication, at least not yet, that consumer spending is out of control. At the moment it is running at only half the annual rate — 7.5 per cent — that it reached during the Lawson boom.

Finally, the 10 per cent appreciation in the value of the pound this year has administered considerable monetary tightening to the economy. Roger Bootle, newly appointed to the Treasury's panel of "wise people", warned earlier this month that the authorities should not underestimate the impact of sterling on the level of activity.

So, some predictions then. Growth next year will be at least as strong as expected, and perhaps a bit higher. Inflation will end the year above its 2.5 per cent target, but not by that much, largely because base rates will be raised in the new year and again in the late spring or early summer.

The first real signs that demand is skewed too heavily towards consumption will come from the current account, where the initially beneficial effect of the strong pound on export prices will wear off during 1997.

John Major and Kenneth Clarke will have an easier time of it over the next few months than Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. The Conservative case in the run-up to the election will be that the sacrifices have been worth it, unemployment is coming down fast, inflation is low, house prices are picking up, and it's time to feel good again.

For all its validity, Labour's case is more difficult to make. The economy does have the deep-seated problems of a mismatch between demand

How government should put a brake on the housing cycle

Debate

Peter Kenway and Guy Palmer

RECENT newspaper comment has celebrated the fact that house prices are moving ahead after more than five years, while experts are advising people to trade up since 1997 will see the market rise again. Great news — but what happens next?

So much of the comment is depressingly short-term, and ignores history. The evidence of the last 25 years shows conclusively that the housing market moves in cycles. The recovery will be followed by a downturn some time before the turn of the century.

This is — or should be — a major problem of social policy since 85 per cent of households with working heads own their home. The 1990s is repositioning in the 1990s is unlikely to approach one million directly affecting about one million people — a major indictment of government policy. Much of the cost of this market failure falls on the public purse through the social

housing sector and housing benefits, so there is an economic as well as a social welfare imperative to act. Since the early 1990s just under 10 per cent of council rehousing have been to families repossessed, and private rent allowances have soared.

Low inflation means when the market next passes through the downturn, prices will fall in absolute terms, as in the early 1990s. Negative equity will reappear.

And we are still living with the consequences of the last crash. More than 80,000 households are more than a year in mortgage arrears, and repossessions are at the same rate as previous years. This against a background of the revolution in the retail finance sector, over-capacity with new mortgage business falling by 50 per cent since 1988, and building society conversion pointing to the suggestion for market share creating greater turbulence.

So what should be done? We have a few suggestions, based on the idea that government should act to change the environment within which institutions make their decisions — since it is within the power of these institutions to avoid a lot of the problems in the first place.

The first two are examples of decreasing the risk to the homebuyer by shifting part of it to the mortgage lending institutions. The last two are examples of action to address over-capacity of finance.

FIRST, as is common in the United States, government could limit by law the amount by which mortgage rates can increase in any year. This is not a proposal to do away with variable rates but to smooth the interest rate shocks which are a big cause of many difficulties for the homeowner.

Second, it could require lenders to have a continuing obligation for housing those who are repossessed, perhaps for three years from the start of the arrears. This would stimulate lenders to act promptly and work with borrowers to avert and manage arrears, as many councils do with tenants.

Third, government should review the regulatory regime to include competitiveness and the customer's interests as well as solvency. This would help to stimulate competition given that the average spread (mortgage rate charged to borrowers less interest rate paid to savers) is significantly higher than 10

years ago, and would help to address increasing concern that some lenders will get into financial difficulties as a result of over-capacity.

Fourth, finance institutions could be encouraged to find alternative uses for their excess financing capacity, for example the private rented sector, repair and renewal in the inner city, investment in localities ill-served by conventional lenders. The government could offer "stakeholder contracts" to develop new financing lines in return for public support — perhaps tax subsidies or exemptions, or guarantees against losses.

Our aim, detailed in a pamphlet, *Housing Risks and Opportunities*, is to lessen problems in the housing market before they become problems for the social housing sector — and the Exchequer — and to change the environment within which institutions like these make their decisions. Across the whole service sector, this is a principle with wider application.

Dr Kenway is a lecturer in economics at Reading University; Guy Palmer is a management consultant. They are co-founders of the New Policy Institute, 60 Cowley Road, London SW11 5NR.

A time of annual celebration even for the most seasoned of cynics

Worm's eye

Dan Atkinson

PUT cynicism aside for a moment, admit to that child-like feeling of excitement and wonder and say to yourself it is almost upon us.

That's right — January is not far away. Those of us able to see clearly through the fog of sentimentality and propaganda have long held that the greatest month of the year is the first, not the last. But now we have hard proof, in the form of the quite disgusting consumer blow-out that marked Christmas 1996. As noted here before, the same people who have spent the

past five years moaning and groaning about the "new age of insecurity" were leading the charge up Oxford Street at the first hint of Clarkelan largesse.

The festival of self-delusion seen during the last fortnight confirms the obvious fact that the British economy has spent too long in December mode and far too little time embracing the virtues of January. Indeed, a year-round January economy is the essential pre-condition of recovery.

From end to end, the much-maligned first month is a model of economic conduct. For a start, January opens with New Year's Day, a festival marked by bracing walks and convivial lunches with family and friends, rather than by the grotesque troughing and

sluicing of December. On to Plough Monday, an admirable occasion connected with the world of work (not a major consideration at Yuletide, in fact not a consideration of any sort).

The weather — usually cited as an objection to January — is key to its admirable nature. Snow, sleet and ice reinforce the mood of hard work and austerity.

As, of course, does the strategic level of debt inherited from Christmas. Because, one undeniable fact — that January follows December — crowns the supremacy of the January model. It is the purgative nature of the January economy that recommends it so highly as a national model.

For the religiously inclined, January can look December in the eye: the

sixth sees Epiphany, alias the Feast of the Three Kings, celebrating the presentation of Jesus to the world beyond Israel. As a symbol of the breaking down of national and racial barriers, this is a festival quite literally with something for everyone.

Danger looms, however. The January of our childhood is under threat. So great are the excesses of Christmas that they threaten to burst their banks. A worrying number of organisations are now holding their "parties" after January 1. The commercialisation of Christmas was one thing. But the jollification of January is an unparalleled menace.

Those of us who really care are going to have to fight this all the way.

Indicators

TODAY — UK: Minutes from October 30th monthly monetary meeting.
US: Personal Income (Nov).
GE: Prelim CPI Inflation (in week, Dec).
TOMORROW — UK: Whole world/non-EU trade (Nov).
FR: Visible trade (Oct).

Tourist rates — bank sells

Australia: 2.032
Austria: 17.75
Belgium: 51.82
Canada: 2.22
Cyprus: 0.791
Denmark: 0.68
Finland: 7.67

Indicators

WEDNESDAY: Holiday.
THURSDAY — JP: Industrial production (Nov).
JP: Unemployment rate (Nov).
FRIDAY — US: Durable goods orders (Nov).
US: Leading Indicators (Nov).
FR: Consumer spending (Nov).
Source: HSBC Global Markets Weekly.

Tourist rates — bank sells

France: 8.49
Germany: 2.58
Greece: 403.60
Hong Kong: 12.57
India: 38.80
Ireland: 0.577
Israel: 5.45

Italy: 2.502
Malta: 0.588
Netherlands: 2.83
New Zealand: 2.288
Norway: 10.52
Portugal: 226.40
Saudi Arabia: 6.20
Singapore: 2.27
South Africa: 7.58
Spain: 212.35
Sweden: 11.25
Switzerland: 2.16
Turkey: 171.248
USA: 1.6285

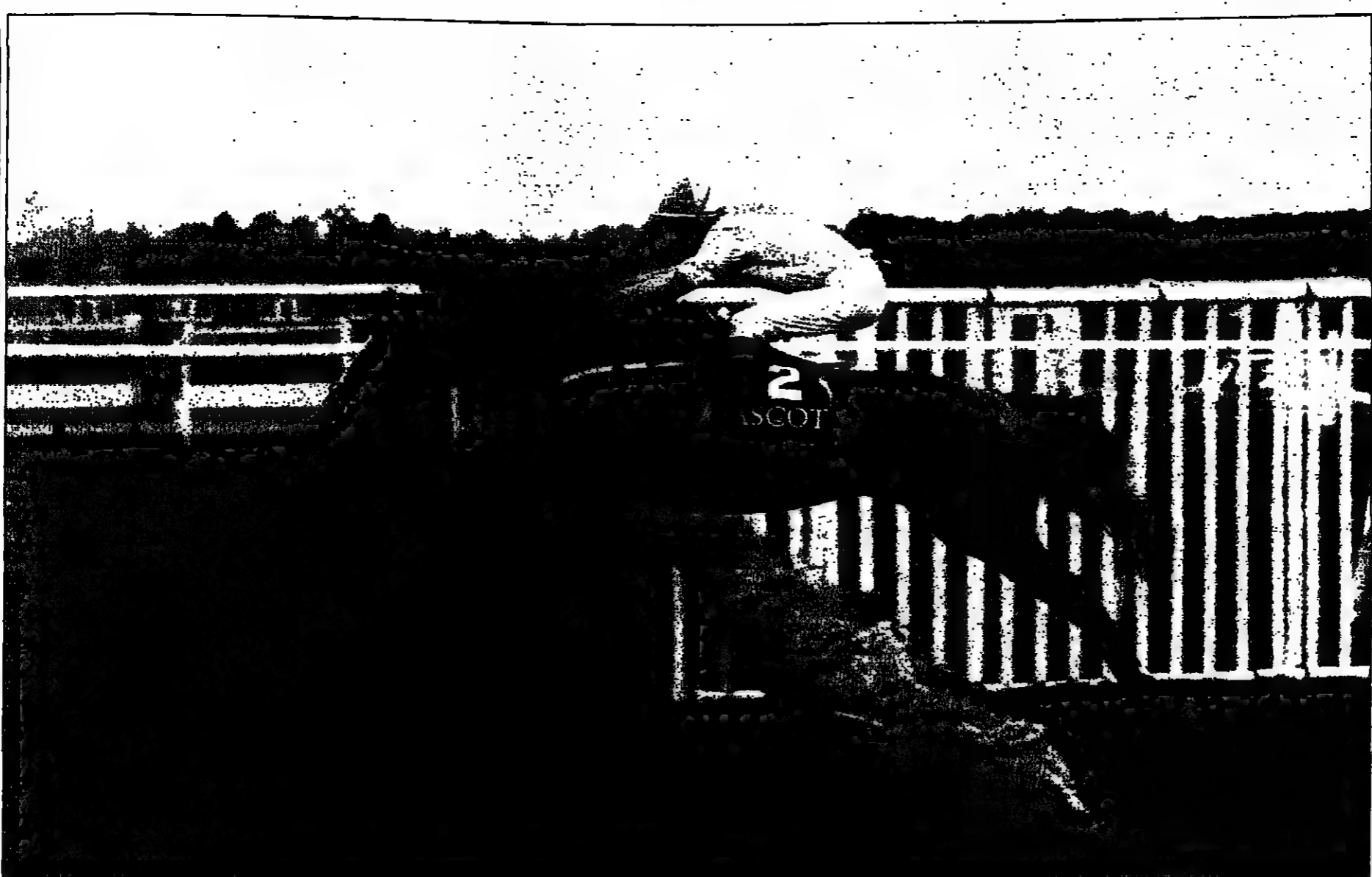
Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel) as at close of business on Friday.

Racing

Rough Quest doubtful for the King George VI Chase if ground conditions are considered too firm. Chris Hawkins reports.

Casey gets cold feet about Kempton

TERRY Casey has warned that Rough Quest could miss Boxing Day's Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton if the ground is firm. "Provided the going is good he will definitely run, but I'm worried by the weather forecast which says there is going to be frost, wind and very little rain," said Casey yesterday.



Long Jump... Ocean Hawk, partnered by Carl Llewellyn, seals victory in the Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot on Saturday with a good jump at the last

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK BARON

Bailey remains fellow for the big occasion

Chris Hawkins WITH Norman Williamson quitting the camp amid domestic upheaval at Old Manor Stables, Upper Lambourn, it looked as if Kim Bailey, the incumbent trainer, would be in for a tough season.

me and I'm happy," said Bailey. "He's an experienced jockey and has made very few mistakes." But O'Dwyer will not be aboard stable star Alderbrook when the former champion hurdler makes a belated reappearance in the Pertemps Christmas Hurdle at Kempton on Friday.

Bailey as he also runs Fellow Countryman in the Coral Welsh National at Cheltenham. "This has been his target all season and I thought he ran bloody well at Lingfield. I'd wanted to get a run, into him earlier but had to wait for the ground."

said Bailey. "He really must have soft ground but the objective is the Grand National with just one run beforehand, maybe the Gold Cup if it were bottomless."

Kelso card with guide to the latest form

Table with racing results and form guides for Kelso. Includes sections for 1.18 Supreme Novice, 1.48 Mulla Min, 12.15 WYKE GRAVE NOVICE HURDLE, 12.45 WHITE SWAN NOVICE HURDLE, 1.15 Supreme Novice, 1.48 Mulla Min, 12.15 WYKE GRAVE NOVICE HURDLE, 12.45 WHITE SWAN NOVICE HURDLE, 1.15 Supreme Novice, 1.48 Mulla Min, 12.15 WYKE GRAVE NOVICE HURDLE, 12.45 WHITE SWAN NOVICE HURDLE.

Ludlow with form guide

Table with racing results and form guides for Ludlow. Includes sections for 1.00 PERPETUIT BENTLEY, 1.30 TANNERS WYKE NOVICE HURDLE, 1.30 TANNERS WYKE NOVICE HURDLE, 1.30 TANNERS WYKE NOVICE HURDLE, 1.30 TANNERS WYKE NOVICE HURDLE.

McCoy full of go on Ballistic

FOLLOWING the Hennessy victory of Coome Hill trained by west country farmer Walter Dennis, it was the turn of John O'Shea, another small operator, to win Saturday's big race, the Betway Chase at Ascot, writes Chris Hawkins.

McCoy and Dunwoody were involved in the action all afternoon and they had crossed swords earlier in the Book Of Music Novice Chase. This time it was Dunwoody who came out on top as his mount Simply Dashing thwarted the hattrick bid of Or Royal.

سكنا من الامل

Binkered for the first time today: LUDLOW 2.00 GI Moss.

SOCCER

Premiership: Aston Villa 5, Wimbledon 0

Dons yield unbeaten run in style

WIMBLEDON'S long unbeaten record ended with a rout of goals at Villa Park yesterday. Having accepted the first from Santa's Grotto, Aston Villa scored four more to go fourth in the Premiership table.

For supporters accustomed to a frugal diet, this was a rare feast. It was only the second time since the start of the season that Villa had scored three times. On the previous occasion they had lost 4-3 at Newcastle but there was no chance of a similar setback yesterday.

This was Wimbledon's first defeat in 20 league and cup games. It was also their heaviest since losing 6-1 at Newcastle 14 months earlier. Considering Villa also had three goals disallowed for offside, Joe Kinnear's team could count themselves fortunate to have avoided a repetition of their 7-1 rout at Villa Park two seasons ago.

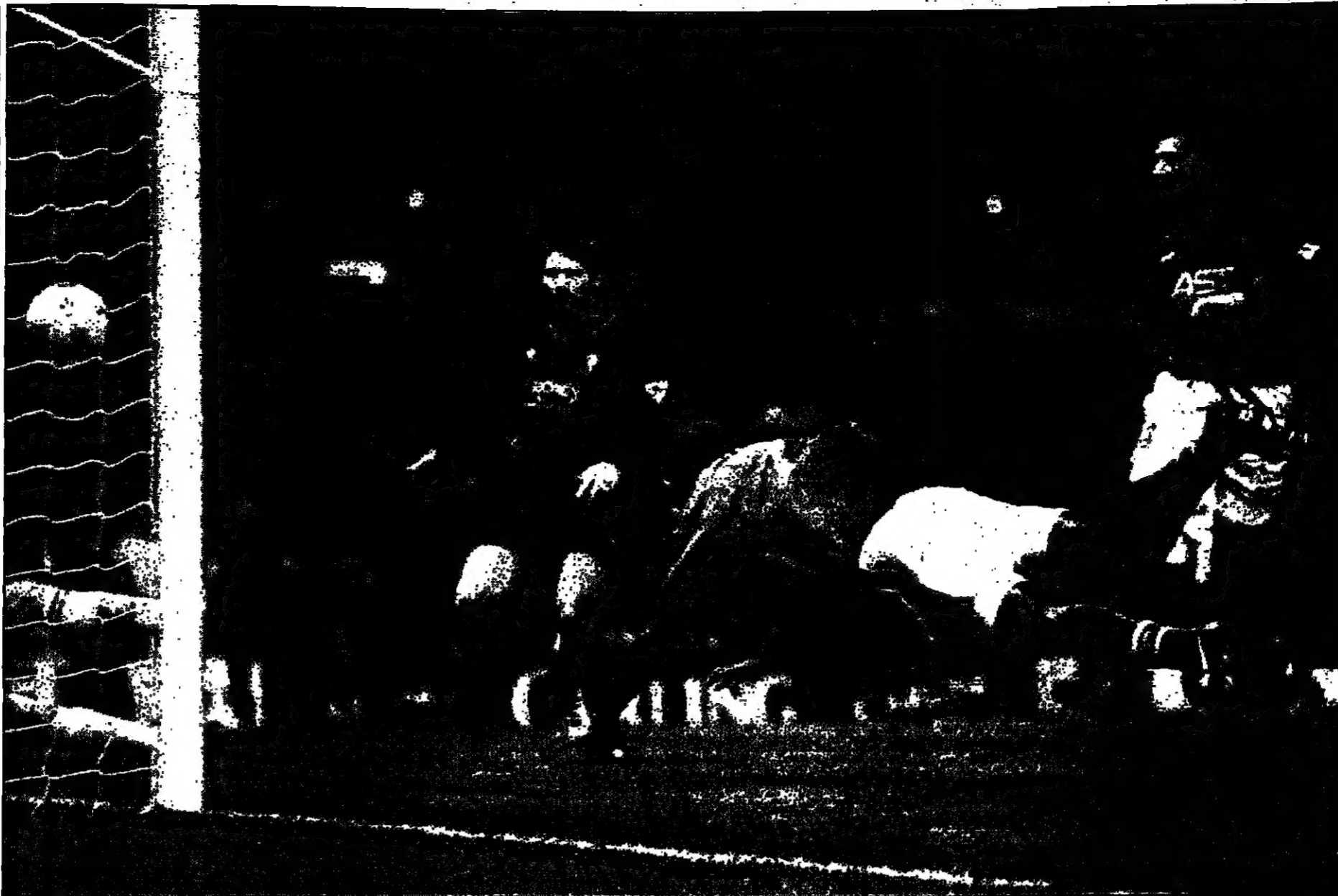
Though ultimately well beaten, Wimbledon defended so solidly during the first half-hour that the prospect of their opponents putting five shots on target, let alone scoring five times, looked remote.

Their second-half collapse was so complete that the idea of their drawing level on points with Liverpool at the top became absurd. With both Arsenal and Wimbledon losing over the weekend, Liverpool can extend their Premiership lead to five points by beating Newcastle at St James' Park tonight.

This is the first time in five seasons of Premiership football that Aston Villa have achieved five successive victories. They ended yesterday's game locking their place among the leading pursuers but before scoring they offered a number of reasons why their challenge might still be muted.

Faced with a packed defence offering the narrowest glimpse of goal, Brian Lilley's team played patiently when their passing required more snap. Nelson and Wright were advancing into the spaces Wimbledon were prepared to allow on the flanks but produced few centres of quality.

Yorkie was well marshalled by the Wimbledon centre-backs Perry and Blackwell, and only the studious ball



Flying in the face of statistics... Ian Taylor heads Aston Villa three up and Wimbledon's unbeaten run of 19 games is beyond salvation

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN HODGSON

control of Milosevic offered Villa much hope of breaking the chilly stalemate.

The goal that changed the whole pattern of the proceedings came seven minutes before half-time and only seconds after Villa had been denied by one of the season's more aberrant off-side decisions; at least three Wimbledon defenders appeared to keep Yorkie outside when Taylor played the ball through to him.

What followed, therefore,

was poetic justice of Tennysonian proportions. Sullivan played the free-kick out to Cunningham on the right, where the full-back attempted a return pass to his goalkeeper but only gave Yorkie a clear run through now unopposed territory to thread a shot between Sullivan's legs.

Four minutes later Villa were further ahead. This time Perry, misjudging the ball in the air, inadvertently back-headed behind his own lines. Blackwell came racing across

to cover the danger but missed both ball and Milosevic, who held off the centre-back's subsequent challenge to stab a shot past Sullivan.

Their plans for containment in disarray, Wimbledon spent the rest of the match getting more men forward and as a result leaving themselves increasingly exposed at the back. The alert Yorkie, ably supported by Milosevic and Townsend, was now in his element.

Taylor headed Aston Villa's

third goal a minute past the hour after a superb cross from Staunton on the left. Sullivan blocked Milosevic's first-time shot but the ball rebounded to a grateful Taylor at the near post.

With 14 minutes remaining Milosevic accepted a return pass from Townsend to score his second goal and Villa's fourth with the aid of a deflection off Blackwell. Then in the 86th minute Yorkie darted in front of Blackwell to meet a low centre from Curcio, who

had replaced Draper, and complete the scoring with the most stylish finish of the afternoon, an exquisite flick into the far corner of the net.

Kinnear described the result as "a blim". At least the Villa Park crowd had refrained from singing Colonel Bogey.

"If, at the start of the season, I'd told people that by Christmas we would have been level with Liverpool at the top if we had beaten Aston Villa they'd have carried me

off to the moustache," the Wimbledon manager argued defiantly. "Now people will be saying what a great side Aston Villa are but they're still a point behind us."

Villa met Chelsea on Boxing Day and have imminent fixtures against Arsenal, Manchester United, Newcastle and Liverpool, so Kinnear may be right to keep a sense of perspective. But at times yesterday his crazy gang, as of old, must have driven him mad.

Manchester United 5, Sunderland 0

Bunch of five fails to impress the doubters

Michael Walker sees United still at odds and is unconvinced by Alex Ferguson who said the 'scoreline speaks for itself'

THERE appear to be two opinions prevailing about the state of Manchester United. The first, loud and dramatic, is that they are a team on the slide who, dangerously, have placed their single egg in a basket marked "Europe".

This is the view that says Steve Bruce is missed more than could have been imagined, especially since Gary Pallister has gone. Eric Cantona is in terminal decline rather than temporary depression, Karel Poborsky is a disaster and as a consequence United have been revealed as a well-oiled machine on the muscles of Roy Keane and the potential of David Beckham. A comparatively meagre haul of nine

points from eight games before Saturday and a series of relatively listless displays had given holders to this line some ammunition.

The differing view is that United are not struggling but cruising. Like a horse travelling easy in the Derby they are content to track the leaders until Tottenham Corner has been turned.

According to this "double handful" argument it was always going to take time to adjust to Bruce's departure. Europe can be forgotten until March and Cantona is sure to rediscover the inspiration within. Poborsky can only get better. Keane will be back soon and so too will Andy Cole — he plays his return game

for the reserves tonight. Of the recent run, they say, well, United have not lost in six and have winnable games against Nottingham Forest and Leeds on Thursday and Saturday.

These 90 minutes provided evidence to support both opinions. For half an hour United were as mute as their stadium. If Sunderland were not rampant, they were in control principally because of Butt's anonymity in midfield in comparison to Ball's aggression. Cantona was nowhere too, while at the back Patister and May were unconvincing in the face of Russell's enthusiasm. It was not until Brian Kidd ventured down from

the stand to launch a tirade of orders that the disorientation was dispelled. Essential to this was the switching of Gary Neville from wide on the right into midfield, which enabled United to compete physically with Sunderland's solidity there.

Neville's first task in his new role was to win a tackle. And Hasky is only 18. O'Neill lamented a lack of left feet. A lack of heads was more to the point. And, when Marshall, in defence, showed his in attack, Ogrizovic saved athletically. Sinton gave a 30-year-old no alternative. The manager was marking a year in office. Promotion and 13th place surpass expectations but the survival job is not half done. They need to win the six-pointers. After Anfield on Thursday they face another, at home to Forest.

Covenry, well organised in defence, were content to hold the play on the edge of the area and set Whelan and Huckerby like greyhounds from their own half on to long passes of the sort that McAlister specialises in. Whelan, with three goals from 17 games, missed two sixers in the last quarter-hour. If Strachan moves him to full-back he will probably get a hat-trick next match. This is at Leeds on Boxing Day. The manager and captain would enjoy that, though logic decrees a goalless draw.

blue". Had it not gone in, the champions might have been in for a long, laborious afternoon against spirited survivalists for it was not obvious from where a spark would come.

"Goals change games, though," said Reid and, when Butt crashed in a header near the hour, United had scored four in 22 minutes. There was a final flourish to come from Cantona, chipping in a fifth elegantly off a post, giving the optimists a swagger on their way home.

The pessimists could argue, though, that it was only Sunderland and for 35 minutes United could not have beaten Brighton. Afterwards Alex Ferguson said he was having a Christmas break from speaking to the press. He then added: "The scoreline speaks for itself." Does it?



Old, old... Solskjaer celebrates his second goal. JOHN GILES

Leicester City 0, Coventry City 2

Dublin's fair switch

Jeremy Alexander

THE Coventry chairman Bryan Richardson will "take us on to the good times". He thought it before they beat Newcastle, their first victory in more than a month under Strachan. Another on Saturday, their first away this season, supports the confidence. Club and team spirit were clearly high. No one assaulted a team-mate.

Richardson attributes it to Strachan's oratory. "People who had been going to the gym for 20 years were saying Gordon's speech [he got a standing ovation] was the best they had heard from a manager because he was so honest," he said on Friday. Honesty is apparently as rare at Coventry as logic.

Most managers have faced the problem of the proven goal scorer who dries up. Retraining the ball continues to fly in from all angles and distances. In play it is scuffed, deflected, sliced or, when perfectly struck, brilliantly served. Second nature turns to second thoughts; and hesita-

tion contradicts instinct. At Old Trafford Ferguson has persevered with Cantona; on Saturday Cantona scored his first Premiership goal for 97 days. At Forest Pearce moved Saunders to a Stone role; Saunders set up the equaliser. Strachan took Dublin out of the firing line into central defence; the Leicester-born man headed both goals, having got four in 15 league games up front. Dublin's fair city is a lighter blue now.

His was a doubly match-winning performance. Between the goals he twice rescued Coventry — once from his own mistake — when Hasky was clear and thought he had time to steady himself. "Whatever box he's in," said Strachan of Dublin, "the ball seems to be attracted to him." For both goals the ball seemed to repel the home defence. Both were set-piece deliveries by the captain McAlister, who used to play for Leicester. They paid the price of history and reverie.

Hasky needs a rest that Leicester do not have the reserves to allow him. He has been an under-all-ages international. "I'm told the fort-

night since our last match is his longest break for about five years," Martin O'Neill said. And Hasky is only 18. O'Neill lamented a lack of left feet. A lack of heads was more to the point. And, when Marshall, in defence, showed his in attack, Ogrizovic saved athletically. Sinton gave a 30-year-old no alternative. The manager was marking a year in office. Promotion and 13th place surpass expectations but the survival job is not half done. They need to win the six-pointers. After Anfield on Thursday they face another, at home to Forest.

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Everton 0, Leeds United 0

Deane posts late for Leeds

Ian Ross

ALL but the most naive football managers embrace the concept of understatement, and that made Joe Royle's almost painful honesty all the more refreshing. "I have seen worse games but, yes, it was down," he said, making no attempt to convince anyone that a 0-0 draw had resembled a silk purse.

The hardy souls who follow Leeds United have also seen worse games — plenty of late, in fact — but, significantly, their faith has at least been partially restored. A sixth clean sheet in seven games had provided further proof

that their team can, after all, defend with robust efficiency. Leeds score infrequently but until such time as George Graham starts to look forward with optimism rather than gazing backwards in fear, that will remain something of an irrelevance.

Indeed, they would have won with something to spare had Brian Deane not spent the entire afternoon trying to play himself out of a job. As he was missing a succession of relatively simple chances, Tony Yeboah sat a few yards away, restored to full health and bemused at his failure to win an immediate recall to a team with 15 goals in 18 league games this season.

Stanic sours Sacchi's return

ARRIGO SACCHI, the former Italy coach, has suffered his first league defeat since returning to AC Milan. Mario Stanic's first-half header gave Parma a 2-0 victory at the San Siro yesterday.

The champions' fifth defeat of the season leaves them seventh in the table. With Vincenzo Montella goals at Sampdoria and Inter held 1-1 at bottom-of-the-table Reggina, the league leaders Juventus stretched their advantage to six points despite being held 1-1 at Piacenza.

"To be honest, I was never tempted to put Tony on," said Graham. "We have been doing well and, if a side is playing with confidence, then the players stay in. It is then up to those others on the outside to try and force their way in."

Yeboah could do just that against Coventry on Boxing Day, for even the unwaveringly loyal Graham may find it difficult to stand by Deane after a late miss which would have made a schoolboy striker blush.

Barely two minutes remained when Unsworth's clumsy clearance landed at the feet of Rush inside the Everton penalty area. Rush snatched at the chance but rarely has a mis-hit shot proved so fortuitous. It rolled in front of Deane, arriving fast at the back post, one yard from goal. He could not miss, but did. His shot struck the woodwork.

For Everton, Royle was no long-talking championships, just common sense. "All the stars were defenders today," he conceded. "It looked like it was going to be tight from the first minute; it almost seemed destined to end goalless."

Managerial merry-go-round hits top speed in Scotland

Patrick Glenn

IF the Department of Employment in Scotland opened a JobCentre for football managers, it would need a revolving door. The past 48 hours have brought the number of managerial changes to 16 with the season not yet at the halfway stage.

Nowhere was the turnover quicker than at Falkirk, the First Division club who installed Alex Tait less than 24 hours after Eamonn Bannon was blamed for fielding an ineligible player in a league match and attracting a £25,000 fine his club could ill afford.

Totten, himself dismissed by Kilmarnock just over a fortnight previously, declined an offer to coach in Hong Kong managed for a year in 1992-93. The recently elected Kilmarnock board, chaired by the former player Ronnie Hamilton, had talks yesterday with Alex MacDonald of Aldrie. No business was concluded but MacDonald's departure would create another vacancy, with Bannon, Billy Kirkwood — sacked by Dundee United — and Alex Smith, who lost his job at Clyde,

Chelsea 3

West Ham United 1

Hughes doubles up but Zola is star turn

Russell Thomas

GIANFRANCO ZOLA's ear-to-ear smile disarms his sternest critics. And that is before he dons the boots that can bedazzle the most resolute defence.

Since West Ham's rearguard emphatically does not fall into that category, Zola could indulge in a performance to match that grin.

The diminutive Italian rolled out his extensive repertoire, a stunning goal the centre-piece of his act. At times slight of foot appeared an understatement.

So, too, did the praise of Chelsea's player-manager Ruud Gullit. "His skills, his way of playing, stole the hearts of the crowd," Stamford Bridge was enthralled on Saturday, alternating between an expectant hush and an excited roar each time the ball rolled Zola's way.

His first win in a Chelsea shirt coincided with his first London derby. The home fans revelled in their team's stylish superiority but Zola could not understand all the fuss. Yet this was a startling improvement from the supine defeat at Sunderland. The Italian said simply: "Today we were more a team, 11 players who played on the same level." Well, up to a point.

Disturbingly for future opponents, he sets himself higher standards. "I could have scored more today. I can do better, I can be more effective for the team."

Zola's performance was unquestionably enhanced by Mark Hughes's vintage display of brilliance and craft. Zola reciprocated in a new partnership that blossomed from the whistle. But where does that leave the injured leading scorer but whose understanding with Hughes has shored up to a point.

Gullit appears unconcerned. "It's a luxury. Every coach should have that problem," Harry Redknapp's ears probably burned. "I'm down to two front men," lamented West Ham's crestfallen manager. "I've got Raducic and Newell, who's on loan for a month." And no more to combat a decline that stretches to nine games without a win.

Redknapp was equally concerned about the sluggishness of Rieper and Bilic in central defence that permitted Hughes to score with a half-kick shot after six minutes and a slow but beautifully directed header in the 35th.

Dicks, baited by the crowd, led by pugnacious example. The captain's header brought Gordon's only save. But even Hughes to score with a half-kick shot after six minutes and a slow but beautifully directed header in the 35th.

West Ham's Porfirio Guedes, who's on loan for a month. "And no more to combat a decline that stretches to nine games without a win. Redknapp was equally concerned about the sluggishness of Rieper and Bilic in central defence that permitted Hughes to score with a half-kick shot after six minutes and a slow but beautifully directed header in the 35th. Dicks, baited by the crowd, led by pugnacious example. The captain's header brought Gordon's only save. But even Hughes to score with a half-kick shot after six minutes and a slow but beautifully directed header in the 35th. West Ham's Porfirio Guedes, who's on loan for a month. As a player, he was dubbed "the new Maradona" in Naples. He is now 30. Catch him if you can.

150 من الال

SOCCER



Afterthought... Wright is sent off despite apology to Jerkan

Premiership: Nottm Forest 2, Arsenal 1

Pearce's punchline arrives by proxy

Richard Williams

In a gesture worthy of the last man but one to occupy the manager's office at Nottingham Forest...

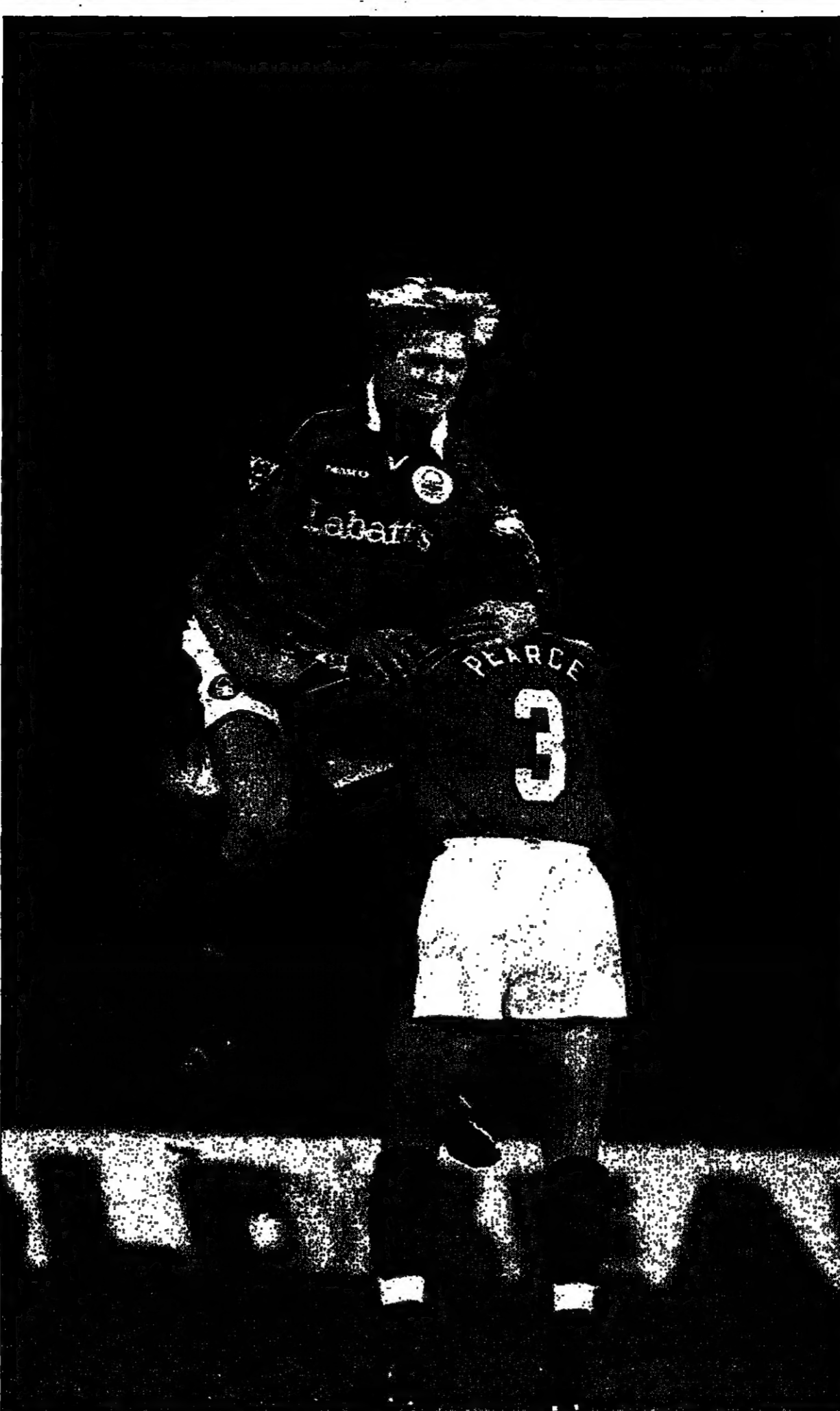
his 35 goals a season that cost Forest their momentum, and the injury to Steve Stone...

Behind his repertoire of acrobatics and pugacious gestures, Pearce may also turn out to be a thoughtful tactician...

Coming on as a late substitute for the fifth Roy, Clough announced that he has gained nothing in pace during his unhappy sojourns at Anfield and Maine Road...

By then he had lost his striking partner Ian Wright, who had given Arsenal the lead after 64 minutes when he pounced on a loose ball...

It was Clark's failure to replace Stan Collymore and



High jinks... Healand's winning goal saw him rise to the occasion of Pearce's first game in charge

take quiet retaliation for a second Nikola Jerkan body-check by scrapping his studs down the Croatian defender's shin...

crisp volley. A carbon-copy move by the little Welshman almost produced a goal for the disappointing Campbell...

Arsenal, lacking Seaman, Adams, Dixon and Vieira, were not up to their recent collective form...

Formerly of Strasbourg, Gardie cannot boast the fluency or vision of the suspended Vieira but he looks a better class of journeyman than Arsenal are used to...

vanoe quite outshining Platt's negligible contribution. If this was not the match on which to judge their championship potential...

Having signed a forward, Iversen, he snapped up a workaday centre-back, Liverpool's John Scales, from under the noses of Leeds...

Francis is clearly a stage manager rather than an artistic director. Tottenham followers desperate for a transformation scene are being offered a stronger safety curtain...

With Walker in defence and Nicol in midfield, Sheffield Wednesday resembled a Semprini serenade — old ones, new ones, loved ones, neglected ones...

Southampton 3, Derby County 1

Derby plan laid low by virus

Fat Symes

REGULATION is not a word managers as experienced as Graeme Souness and Jim Smith utter before Christmas...

Premiership survival is the limit of their ambitions at this juncture and not even Smith's chirpy post-match appraisal could conceal his disapproval of the failure to emerge from The Dell with at least a face-saving point...

Derby missed Sturridge more than Southampton missed Matthew Le Tissier, whose absence with a thigh injury precipitated a run of five successive league defeats...

Boro defend decision to call off match

Boro defend decision to call off match

THE Middlesbrough chairman Steve Gibson yesterday insisted the club had "a genuine case" in answer to criticism of their decision to call off Saturday Premiership match at Blackburn...

The match was postponed on Friday when Middlesbrough informed the Premier League they could not field a team that would do justice to the club and paying public, claiming they had 23 players injured or ill...

Southampton have denied reports that a consortium headed by the broadcaster Sir David Frost is about to buy a major stake in the Premiership club with a view to buying new players and financing a new £40 million stadium...

First Division: Swindon Town 2, Bolton Wanderers 2

McGinlay's goal answers barrackers

Trevor Haylett

A BITTER wind cut into this corner of Wiltshire yesterday and threatened to turn Bolton's trip into a full-blown crisis...

So Barnsley will spend Christmas as the unlikely leaders. Afterwards Colin Todd described them as the division's best team, though whether he was including his

own in that calculation was not entirely clear. However, it was readily apparent that the Bolton manager did not rate this performance...

Undone by a late Ipswich goal which cost them their unbeaten home record the previous weekend, Bolton left their second equaliser at the County Ground until five minutes from time...

Four times previously Hendrie has played in promoted

sides, with Bradford City, Leeds and twice with Middlesbrough. He is 35 now, has banished any thoughts he may have harboured of appearing for Scotland...

There still seems something faintly unreal about their current exalted position but their challenge shows no signs of waning. Hendrie stresses that it is still mid-winter but they

will be there or thereabouts come spring. If Hendrie can do no wrong in the eyes of the Barnsley public neither can the club's manager Danny Wilson...

modest cost and get them all playing for each other within a simple but effective pattern. There are no obvious superstars — though Dave Watson, their young goalkeeper, could be one in the making...

ham for, although this result was a disappointment — United would have gone top if they had won — there was little to criticise. Don Hutchison returned after suspension and was arguably the game's outstanding player but United are currently missing a clutch of first-team men...

Tottenham 1, Sheffield Wednesday 1

Spartan Spurs have little of the glory, glory look

Commentary

David Lacey

IT IS easy to see why Tottenham Hotspur's supporters feel disgruntled these days. Efficiency in a football team may be healthy but Spurs fans reared on Hoddle, Waddle, Gascoigne and Klinsmann expect something more...

Saturday's 1-1 draw with David Platt's revived Sheffield Wednesday team was greeted by booing which sounded weary rather than angry. Once Nielsen had equalised in the 28th minute, Nolan having given Wednesday the lead in the 18th, the outcome was as predictable as socks at Christmas...

Trus, Sheringham did hit a post a little later but even this might have been expected. Tottenham's manager Gerry Francis said it was the eighth time in three matches that Spurs had struck the woodwork, yet he insisted that, given the inconsistencies of most of the teams above them, the season was still full of possibilities...

Then again, Tottenham fans could be forgiven for fearing their season will subside after Spurs have visited Manchester United in the third round of the FA Cup on Sunday week. So far Spurs have been all pars and no birdies — 13 matches played, 18 goals scored, 18 conceded...

Watching the Tottenham of Oles Arvidas was like looking at a team of Blondins crossing Niagara Falls, except that Blondin had a better sense of balance. Francis's pedestrian Tottenham side prefers the footbridge to the tight-rope...

Their supporters' criticisms were originally aimed at the chairman Alan Sugar and his reluctance to buy foreign players. Now, with the emerging talents of Norway's Steffen Iversen, signed from Rosenborg for £2.7million, Francis is more of a target for the fans' displeasure...

He is said to lack imagination, hardly a well-founded charge remembering his days as the fulcrum of a forward-thinking Queens Park Rangers side that narrowly missed the championship in the mid-Seventies. But as manager, both at QPR and Tottenham, he has never allowed romance to run ahead of practicality...

Having signed a forward, Iversen, he snapped up a workaday centre-back, Liverpool's John Scales, from under the noses of Leeds. Now Spurs are being linked with another defender, Switzerland's Ramon Vega, at present with Cagliari...

Francis is clearly a stage manager rather than an artistic director. Tottenham followers desperate for a transformation scene are being offered a stronger safety curtain...

With Walker in defence and Nicol in midfield, Sheffield Wednesday resembled a Semprini serenade — old ones, new ones, loved ones, neglected ones, but generally they were more enterprising than Spurs and would not have been flustered by the victory which a shot from Hinkley, one of the substitutes, nearly secured four minutes from the end...

It was clear that Platt did not see in Francis's Tottenham team much resemblance to the side he had taken to an FA Cup final nine years earlier. "All we had to defend well today were Nielsen's long throws," he said. "Some bloke behind me said he couldn't see the game. I said 'Look up!'"

This was a slightly simplistic view of Saturday's events. But for Fressman's agility, Nielsen's through-ball to Iversen would have sent Tottenham in with a 2-1 lead at half-time, and Sheringham was denied a goal by that post...

Yet Platt's barbed aside that "Howells would be a good player in a good team" will reverberate among Spurs fans impatient for something to happen at White Hart Lane apart from the books being balanced on and off the field...

Sugar is not going to do a Ninotchka, lecture everyone on sound economics before dropping fortune on an outrageous piece of foreign frivolity, Asprilla being the footballing equivalent of Garbo's Parisian hat. But it may take more than a blond Norwegian prodigy to convince White Hart Lane that, even when Anderson and Armstrong are fit, Spurs will be anything other than fair-to-middling.

Hughes double up for Zola's start

High jinks... Healand's winning goal saw him rise to the occasion of Pearce's first game in charge

First Division: Swindon Town 2, Bolton Wanderers 2

Tottenham 1, Sheffield Wednesday 1

Five pages of sport

Sled racing
Frank Keating
joins the
Forest of
Dean mushers

12

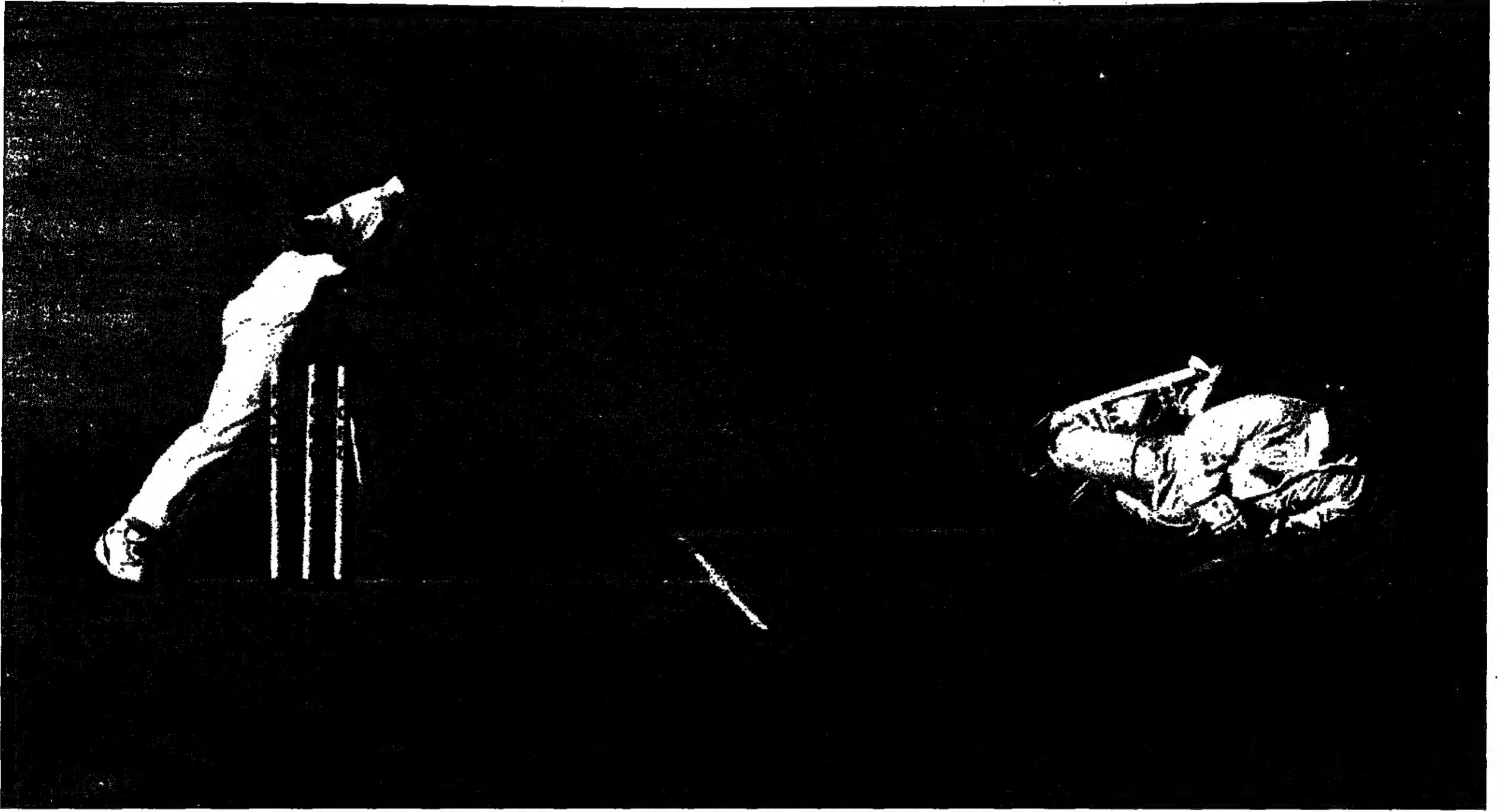
Soccer
Five-goal
Villa put
paid to
Wimbledon

14

SportExtra

TEST CRICKET

Wide boys anger England



Desperate finish... Darren Gough just gets home during the last dramatic over as Zimbabwe's pace bowler Heath Streak whips off the balls at the Queen's Club ground yesterday.

PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MASON

All square as Zimbabwe survive last-ball drama

David Hopps in Epsom

ENGLAND visit Victoria Falls today and it will be a wonder if no one throws himself off the edge. Never has a side come closer to winning a Test match without actually doing so but mention that by way of consolation and the response is one of numbed and dazed expressions.

"We murdered 'em, we flipping murdered 'em," said David Lloyd, England's coach, and he knew that changed nothing. For the first time in Test cricket the score book entry reads: "Match drawn with scores level."

England, boldly chasing 206 for victory in 37 overs, mentally won the match a thousand times but finished deeply frustrated on 204 for five.

legitimate enough but they will deeply offend all those who extol the game's spirit. One ball, in particular, sticks in the craw. The umpire Ian Robinson had an embarrassing match and his decision to judge the fourth ball of the final over as acceptable ranks as one of the most outrageous abdication of responsibility in Test history.

Heath Streak fired it so wide outside Nick Knight's off-stump that the left-hander, named Man of the Match for his 96 from 118 balls, would not have reached it with an extension.

The two tied Tests were essentially joyous affairs, with both sides able to celebrate an equal share of a special occasion. England, arguably as the only possible victors, came even closer to winning yesterday but there was no similar sense of excitement, just an exasperating recognition that success had eluded them. Ask Versace to dress up a draw and it would still seem just as undesirable.

Thirteen were needed from Streak's final over and, when Knight thrashed his third ball

over deep-square for six, England were on the verge of a momentous victory. But the next ball passed by out of reach and Knight drove the fifth to long off for two runs.

With three required from the final ball, Knight lashed Streak to the cover boundary. "I muddled it and thought it had a chance," he said, but Stuart Carlisle's throw helped run out Knight.

This was not the classiest Test ever played — the seam bowling on both sides was too mediocre for that — but the climax on this intimate Queen's Club ground was compelling.

For Geoffrey Boycott to complain on BBC Radio that it was not proper Test cricket, that the bowling was too easy, that England were winning at a canter, not only proved to be inaccurate, but over-emphasised quality at the expense of sensation.

England rined the two hours lost to rain on the second day. Others, less fairly, concentrated on the time lost on the fourth afternoon when John Crawley, protecting the tail, became engaged in a prolonged tactical contest to keep

the strike. More persuasively they simply did not take Zimbabwe's last five wickets quickly enough yesterday.

Zimbabwe, 107 for five overnight, led by 77 and looked ripe for England's spinners, but they resisted until half an hour before tea and were within minutes of making a draw inevitable. The nightwatchman Bryan Strang was soon dismissed as he tried to strike Tufnell down the ground but adventurous half-centuries from Waller and Whittall carried the fight impressively.

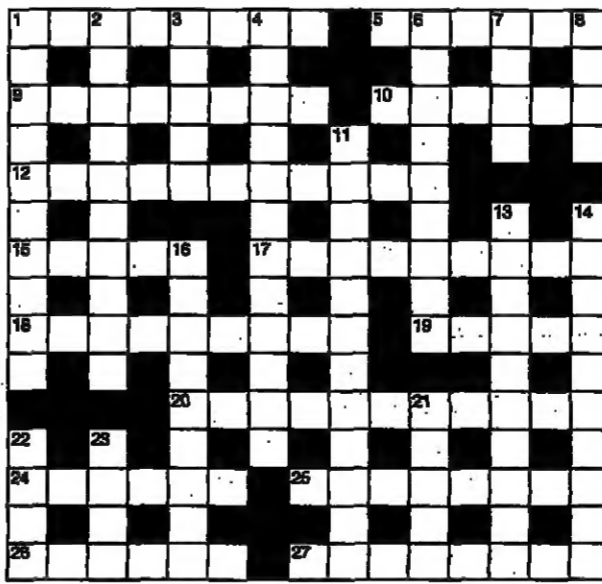
Lloyd's incoherent reference to "getting 15 of them out" was that of a man who felt that England's spinners had been refused several valid claims for bat-and-pad catches. Crawley's catch off Croft's bowling looked particularly persuasive but Paul Strang added only another single before falling to the same combination.

England, who appealed indiscriminately and in an impassioned manner that on Saturday brought a reprimand from the match referee Hanuman Singh, should consider whether such an approach is counter-productive.

Waller was eventually removed by Gough's lobar, although his later new-ball spell was so unimpressive that it lasted only one over. Four wickets for Tufnell included Whittall, caught by the diving Croft at extra-cover.

Guardian Crossword No 20,843

Set by Chifonie

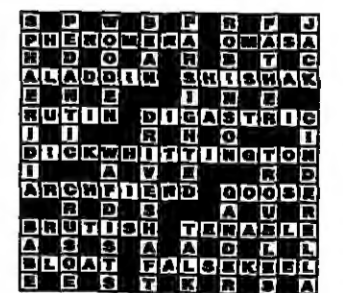


- Across**
- 1 Wager some liquid is setting (6)
 - 5 Computer program reversing trend to Operations Research (6)
 - 9 Split ale, to wet cloth (5,5)
 - 10 Don displays impertinence adopted by child (4,2)
 - 12 It's trendy for convict to get out of trial and fine (6,5)
 - 16 Steel found in commoner vehicles (5)
 - 17 John catches fish for Duke (6)
 - 18 The winger's distance from the line (4,1-4)
 - 19 Grieve the loss of beheaded bird (5)
 - 20 Doctor's to give up one treatment, initially, for

WORDS OF PUZZLE 20,843
This week's winners of a Collins Rogat's International Thesaurus are Alistair H Kell of Edinburgh, Mr W G Goss of Harrow, Middlesex, Pete and Justin Miller of Leicester, D Compton of Frome, Somerset, and D E Britton of Westerham, Kent.

27 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 228 228. Calls cost 50p per minute Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm, and 45p per minute at all other times. Service supplied by AT&T.

- Down**
- 1 Impudence following courage may cause a delay (10)
 - 2 Windbag caught milliner on TV (10)
 - 3 Refuse to admit large physicians (5)
 - 4 Patent axe (wicked sort) improved (4,3,5)
 - 6 Continental stagecoach industry (8)
 - 7, 8 Manufactured great pin



- 11 Blithe characters taken in by especially fine evangelist (5,7)
 - 13 Uncovered bet about old vessel reaching pole (5-5)
 - 14 Colleges in beastly abodes gather expression of reproach (10)
 - 16 Vest Yeoman contrived to make unearned income (4,5)
 - 21 Lash the heat after king departed (5)
 - 22, 23 Bachelor (student) gets lesson in royal retreat (6)
- Solution tomorrow**

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